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ABSTRACT

Based on the idea that an individual cannot understand literature, philosophy, or rhetoric without knowing the field's historical content, this book traces the evolution of the growing and ever-changing field of composition/rhetoric through numerous schools of thought, including Platonism, Aristoteleanism, New Criticism, and the current poststructuralism. After a discussion of the main themes of classical rhetoric, the book offers a historical analysis of the rhetoric of 18th and 19th centuries, focusing briefly on the works of George Campbell, Hugh Blair, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. The book divides the current field of composition/rhetoric into five categories: current-traditional rhetoric, romantic rhetoric, neo-classical rhetoric, new rhetoric, and new stylistics. An entire chapter in the book is devoted to the work of I. A. Richards and Kenneth Burke. The final chapter of the book offers an analysis of poststructuralism influence on composition--discussing New Criticism, deconstruction, feminist criticism, and postmodernism. The book includes a glossary of terms which should be helpful for any teacher. (NKA)

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COMPOSITION IN THE RHETORICAL TRADITION

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W. Ross Winterowd
with Jack Blum

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A Teacher's Introduction to Composition in the Rhetorical Tradition

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NCTE Teacher's
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Foreword

A Teacher's Introduction to Composition in the Rhetorical Tradition is the fourth in a series of books that are especially useful to teachers of English and language arts at all levels. Ours is a wide-ranging discipline, and important scholarly developments in various aspects of our field can be highly complex, not to mention voluminous. We often wish we had the time to take courses or do extended personal reading in topics such as deconstruction, psycholinguistics, rhetorical theory, and the like. Realistically, each of us can read intensively and extensively only in those areas that are of special interest to us or that are most closely related to our work. The Teacher's Introduction Series, then, is geared toward the intellectually curious teacher who would like to get an initial, lucid glance into rich areas of scholarship in our discipline.

Let me stress three things that are *not* intended in *A Teacher's Introduction to Composition in the Rhetorical Tradition* and in other books in this series. First, the books are in no way shortcuts to in-depth knowledge of any field. Rather, these straightforward treatments are intended to provide introductions to major ideas in the field and to whet the appetite for further reading. Second, the books do not aim to "dumb down" complicated ideas, sanitizing them for an imagined "average reader." Many of the ideas are quite challenging, and we don't seek to patronize the reader by watering them down. Third, we don't want to send the message that every subject which is important to English and language arts teachers should be taught directly in the classroom. The personal enrichment of the teacher is paramount here. A great deal of misery might have been avoided in the 1960s if teachers had been doubly urged to learn about grammars new and old—that's part of being a well-rounded teacher—but to *avoid* bringing their new insights, tree diagrams and all, directly into the classroom.

We are grateful to W. Ross Winterowd and Jack Blum for taking on the formidable work of writing so lucidly about the complexities of rhetorical traditions in composition. We welcome your comments on the *Teacher's Introduction* concept.

Charles Suhor
Deputy Executive Director, NCTE

Preface

As an undergraduate at Utah State University (then, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, Utah State Agricultural College) and later as a graduate student at Kansas, I had the great good fortune to have as a mentor Albert R. Kitzhaber, who, amazingly enough, took composition/rhetoric very seriously. When I began to work on my dissertation, I found Wayne Booth and Kenneth Burke. I hope that *Composition in the Rhetorical Tradition* adequately reflects my debt to these three masters.

Over the last four or five years, I have worked closely with my colleague Lawrence (Larry) Green, arguing about the history of rhetoric and team-teaching two seminars in that subject. I hope that Larry has found his association with me as valuable as I have found mine with him. (Larry and I have also lamented the destruction of the University of Southern California graduate program in composition/rhetoric that we had invested so much of ourselves in building.)

Throughout my years at USC, I have learned a great deal more from my students than they have learned from me. I would like to list their names, but realizing that I would inevitably omit someone, I ask that each of them considers her- or himself gratefully acknowledged.

This little book is, in a sense, a prelude to a larger work: a history of what I call English department humanities, tracing the development of *both* composition *and* literary studies, in their institutional and theoretical relationship, since the Enlightenment. Larry Green has been invaluable to me as I have attempted to understand the debasement of rhetoric and the exaltation of "imaginative" literature (and the consequent ghettoization of composition). Also important have been seven of my recent students, Gideon Burton, Dawn Formo, David Holmes, Kevin Parker, Nikole Senecal, Anne Thorpe, and Jen Welsh, all of whom have worked through the manuscript of *Composition in the Rhetorical Tradition*. Asking the right questions and meeting my conclusions with healthy skepticism, they have done an admirable job of making me reconsider my positions, temper my views, and explain clearly.

My colleague Jack Blum has also been one of my students—among the very best. His contribution to the book consists not only in authorship of the last chapter, but in ongoing critical reaction to the manuscript as it developed. Jack's patience, tenacity, intelligence, and wide-ranging knowledge make him a wonderful friend and an invaluable critic.

My great good fortune was to have Richard "Jix" Lloyd-Jones and Timothy "Tim" Crusius as anonymous referees for the manuscript. I wish that I could be specific about the help that they gave me, but to do so would demand such candor about my own blind spots that I would undermine my authority as an author. My debt to Jix and Tim is more than considerable. I think it not inappropriate to thank both of them not only for their invaluable reviews of this book, but also for their contributions to the field of composition/rhetoric.

My hope for this little book is that it helps to bring the focus of composition and of composition studies back where they belong: squarely in the rhetorical tradition.

Introduction

> Rhetoric is the art of finding the available means of persuasion in regard to any subject whatever.
>
> —Aristotle

> Rhetoric, I shall urge, should be a study of misunderstanding and its remedies.
>
> —I. A. Richards

> You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his.
>
> —Kenneth Burke

In planning this work, I have asked myself what background a new member of NCTE would need in order to participate in the professional "dialogue" about *persuasion, misunderstanding and its remedies,* and *identification*—in other words, the basic knowledge required to understand the issues and questions of contemporary rhetoric as these appear in such journals as *Language Arts, English Journal,* and *College Composition and Communication,* and in panels and presentations at the national meetings of NCTE and CCCC. Furthermore, I view *A Teacher's Introduction to Deconstruction,* by Sharon Crowley, and *A Teacher's Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics,* by Timothy W. Crusius, as extremely useful, if not essential, companions to *A Teacher's Introduction to Composition in the Rhetorical Tradition.*

The dilemma in planning this work arises from the need to limit its scope. For example, even though Chaim Perelman has been massively influential in speech communication, his work has not been a major presence in NCTE publications; thus, I have (reluctantly) excluded him from my survey. Another example is Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy,* which can be viewed as a rhetorical treatise on the need for everyone to *identify* with a cultural center. A thoroughgoing study of contemporary rhetoric would include Hirsch, but his work is outside the scope of my purpose.

I begin with a heterodox "reading" of Plato and Aristotle, not from an antiquarian passion, but because the works of these two classical masters embody issues and questions with which every composition teacher should be familiar. No sources in the history of composition/rhetoric are more alive today than Plato's *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus* and Aristotle's *Rhetoric.* Even more important, in the divergent rhetorics of Plato and Aristotle we may trace the origins of a schism which has governed and defined the evolution of composition as a discipline. That is to say, Plato represents and is the father of the tradition that sees the goal of composition as helping the writer develop his or her own "voice" and expressivity, just as Aristotle is the ultimate source of composition as entering a discourse community. Platonism is intensely individual while Aristotelianism is communal, and the contentious play of these two opposing forces constitutes the principal theme of this study. Of late, however, a third *motif* has joined the polyphony of the fugue: skepticism, as represented in, for instance, deconstruction. Isocrates is the perfect representative of skepticism in the classical tradition, and in the first chapter, he joins Plato and Aristotle as archetypal rhetoricians. In the sixth chapter, Jack Blum discusses contemporary skepticism.

In chapter 2, I consider how the individualist conception of rhetoric was transformed under the influence of Romanticism, a transformation that was to have profound consequences for what I term English department humanities and thus for composition. With the coming of Romanticism, rhetoric turned inward, away from the public scenes of discourse that had characterized the rhetoric of Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian.

The third chapter, "Where We Are," characterizes the field of composition/rhetoric as it has developed from the nineteenth century to the present. The purpose of the chapter is to examine the "schools" of composition critically and to place them in their historical context. For the sake of clarity, I divide the field into the following categories: current-traditional rhetoric, romantic rhetoric, neo-classical rhetoric, new rhetoric, and new stylistics.

I. A. Richards and Kenneth Burke are essential to the story, and in the fourth chapter, "Two Modern Masters," I discuss their theories. Richards (1) was a founder of the New Criticism, which virtually defined composition/rhetoric for at least three decades; (2) participated in the revival of rhetoric; (3) is a "spiritual father" of an important school of composition, in this book termed the "Romantic." It goes without saying that Burke, who represents postmodern views, is one of the most influential figures in contemporary rhetoric, and his impact on composition is growing.

In the fifth chapter, I situate composition/rhetoric in current history, asking questions such as these: "What methods of gaining knowledge count in the field?" "Where does composition stand in the postmodernist noetic universe?" "What is the status of composition's historical and institutional relationship with literary studies?" And in the final chapter, my colleague Jack Blum analyzes the influence of poststructuralism—particularly deconstruction—on composition.

I have appended a brief annotated bibliography to each chapter.

Finally, I submit this little book not as a series of answers, but as a chrestomathy of questions. Believing that the life of a field comes about through copious invention, I hope that *Composition in The Rhetorical Tradition* will become a "topic" for productive discourse, a text that furthers identification rather than division.

1 The Classical Tradition and Composition/Rhetoric

Until recently, composition/rhetoric seemed ahistorical, as if the forces that make history—economic conditions, political philosophies, epistemologies, theologies, systems of government and of education, societal values, saints, megalomaniacs, and tyrants—had no influence, as if composition/rhetoric were hermetically isolated from the ebb and flow of historical tides and the maelstroms of revolution. But, of course, this purity, composition's place outside history, was merely a delusion, one of those eerie, affectless, pale nightmares, from which we have now awakened. Like all of the humanities, composition/rhetoric is more obviously, if not more deeply, embedded in history than are the sciences—for instance, chemistry, since one can become an able chemist without knowing much regarding the development of the field from alchemy to the present—but one cannot really understand literature, philosophy, or composition/rhetoric without knowing the field's historical context. (It turns out, indeed, that understanding the present state of the literary enterprise depends to a large extent on one's knowledge of rhetorical history.) In this chapter, I sketch out the main issues and themes in the classical tradition, through the works of Plato, Aristotle, and Isocrates, and in the second chapter, I summarize the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Obviously, I have left an enormous gap. I exclude the works of Quintilian and Cicero, as well as *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, among other important documents in the period between the fifth century B.C. and the first century A.D. Between the third century A.D. and the last quarter of the eighteenth century, I ignore the works of, for example, Augustine, Boethius, Ramus, and Erasmus. My rational (excuse?) is that I can achieve relative brevity without excluding the *main* issues that make our history meaningful.

Plato and Aristotle—the influences of these classical masters resonate in the works of our contemporaries, and, indeed, Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Gorgias* and Aristotle's *Rhetoric* are living texts, through which we can gain an understanding of how our classical heritage has shaped what we are today. Centuries ago, two roads diverged. As M. H. Abrams, among others, has pointed out, Aristotle took one road and Plato the other. The empirical tradition goes back to Aristotle the materials of art are "out there," and art imitates, reproduces, mirrors. The transcendental tradition stems from Plato through Plotinus, Coleridge, Shelley, Emerson, Richards, and others: the objects of art are "[I]deas or forms which are perhaps approachable by way of the world of sense, but are ultimately trans-empirical, maintaining an independent existence in their own ideal space, and available only to the eye of the mind" (Abrams, 36).

The history of rhetoric and the emergence of composition can be traced pretty much in terms of the idealist-empiricist dialectic, but within the last decade or so, another tradition has become important: skepticism, which we see in Kenneth Burke and in the poststructuralists (*e.g.*, Derrida and Foucault). The emergence of contemporary skepticism brought about a revaluation of the classical Sophists (*e.g.*, Gorgias, Protagoras, Isocrates). At this point in the history of our subject, we can say that all three intellectual traditions and epistemologies—idealism, empiricism, and skepticism—underlie much of the discourse regarding composition. As Plato has been our representative of idealism and Aristotle of empiricism, so Isocrates will represent skepticism in this discussion.

Plato, the Idealist

Plato, born around 428 B.C. to aristocratic Athenian parents, should, by all rights, have become a leading figure in the city-state, but the Athenian political situation, and particularly the execution of Socrates in 399, changed the course for which Plato seemed destined, and he withdrew from the turmoil of civic life, traveling extensively until 387, when he returned to Athens and founded his academy, devoted to studying and teaching philosophy and science. Plato died in 348 or 347 B.C. His legacy was Idealism.

No philosophical motif has been more influential or more persistent in the Western tradition than Idealism (either *metaphysical*, from which viewpoint "reality" itself is ideal, or *epistemological*, holding that whether or not there's something "out there," all we can know is mental, not physical). Some of the names associated with Idealism—Plotinus, Spinoza, Kant, Coleridge, I. A. Richards—indicate its pervasiveness in Western thought. Contemporary phenomenology is an extension of Idealism, and deconstruction (as in the works of Derrida) is a counterstatement. As we shall see (chapter 3), the Romantic version of Idealism is the basis for the sometimes tacit philosophy of such practitioners in composition as Peter Elbow, William Coles, and Donald Murray.

To summarize Plato's philosophy briefly (and thus, inevitably, to cheapen it): ideal forms—which are apprehendable (a) through divine inspiration, (b) through remembrance of them as they appeared to the soul before birth, or (c) through the process of dialectic—constitute true knowledge; all else—the world "out there"— is mere appearance.

Notice, now, the trap that Plato set for all who followed him. If "truth" comes about through divine inspiration or remembrance of prenatal visions, then either you have it or you don't. There is no way that, for instance, a teacher, godly and god-like though that pedagogue might be, could either instruct or inspire. Truth and solipsism are virtually synonymous. However, if through *dialectic* two people can arrive at (what they take to be) the truth, then true knowledge, as opposed to opinion (*doxa*), is communal and thus sharable. Ironically, in the Platonic dialogues that are important to us, dialectic is not the give-and-take of truth seekers, but the crafty manipulation of Socrates to establish his own point (and perhaps his intellectual hegemony), thus bringing us out of the epistemological circle just at the point where we entered: truth (knowledge) is absolute, and though you cannot discover it in the senate, the agora, the academy, or your own parlor, a philosopher, one who knows the truth, can lead you to it. (It is perhaps worthwhile to point out the obvious: The Platonic dialogues are not dialogues or dialectic at all, but are "theater" pieces, imitations of dialectic.[1])

In the *Gorgias*, Plato asks a question of momentous importance: Does rhetoric have substance (as does medicine or philosophy), or is it to dialectic as cosmetology is to medicine, a cover-up? Is it a mere knack, such as cookery? Is rhetoric simply the art of flim-flam? These are the same questions—posed in different language and under different circumstances—that trouble composition teachers when they struggle with the problem of the relationship between matter and manner; they are the questions that make "voice" and "sincerity" issues in composition; these questions lead some teacher simply to ignore the *craft* of writing. When anyone condemns a public statement by calling it "mere rhetoric," the ghost of Gorgias—at least as Plato portrays him—hovers near. We should remember, however, that Gorgias was "modern" (even postmodern) in his skepticism, believing that "perfect knowledge of the past, present, and future is impossible" (McComiskey, 83), whereas Plato was *the* foundational absolutist, holding that perfect knowledge exists and is attainable.

The *Gorgias* is tripartite. Accepted wisdom is that in the first two parts, Socrates convinces Gorgias of the danger and mendacity in claiming to be able to teach the art of persuasion, and in the final part, Socrates attempts to convince Callicles that rhetoric is corrupt. A bit of thought and some careful reading, however, convince us that either Plato inadvertently created a double bind for himself or that he was a supreme ironist, attempting not to destroy the foundations of rhetoric, but to make readers think more penetratingly about them.

In any case, let's follow the argument as it develops. When Socrates enters, a group of acquaintances (Callicles, Chaerephon, Polus) have just heard Gorgias deliver a speech, but Callicles assures Socrates that Gorgias will be happy to give a repeat performance. Socrates, however, does not want a performance; he wants a discussion: "I want to learn from him what is the scope of his art and just what he professes and teaches" (230).

Socrates starts to badger Gorgias, asking what this art of rhetoric is concerned with. After all, physicians talk about health, and trainers talk about the condition of the physique. Are they, then, rhetoricians, since they are using speech to explain and carry on their arts? Finally, Socrates maneuvers Gorgias into claiming that rhetoric is "the power to convince by your words the judges in court, the senators in Council, the people in the Assembly, or in any other gathering of a citizen body" (236). In other words, as Socrates says, "[R]hetoric is a creator of persuasion, and . . . all its activity is concerned with this, and this is its sum and substance" (236).

The course that Socrates has charted is now clear: the rhetorician has no obligation to know what he's talking about; therefore, rhetoric *is* merely a cosmetic or a knack, with no obligation to truth. Briefly following the agon is both amusing and instructive. Socrates asks, "Can there be both a false belief and a true, Gorgias? You would, I think, say that there is."

> *Gorgias:* Yes.
>
> *Socrates:* But can there be both a false and a true knowledge?
>
> *Gorgias:* By no means.
>
> *Socrates:* Then it is obvious that knowledge and belief are not the same.
>
> *Gorgias:* You are right.
>
> *Socrates:* But both those who have learned and those who believe have been persuaded.
>
> *Gorgias:* That is so.
>
> *Socrates:* Shall we lay it down then that there are two forms of persuasion, the one producing belief without knowledge, the other knowledge?

> *Gorgias:* Certainly.
>
> *Socrates:* Now which kind of conviction about right and wrong is produced in the law courts and other gatherings by rhetoric? That which issues in belief without knowledge, or that which issues in knowledge?
>
> *Gorgias:* Evidently, Socrates, that which issues in belief.
>
> *Socrates:* Then rhetoric apparently is a creator of a conviction that is persuasive but not instructive about right and wrong.
>
> *Gorgias:* Yes. (238)

By this time, the perceptive reader is becoming suspicious. Gorgias is, of course, a patsy, undermining his own position through his easy agreement with Socrates's pronouncements: "Certainly." "Yes." For example, he might have pointed out that Socrates himself is caught in his argument just as surely as is Gorgias. If the possibilities are forever binaries, there is no space for the contingent, no maybe or perhaps; always either-or, never both-and.

Gorgias claims that he can teach anyone to be a rhetorician, and Socrates asks, "With the result that he would be convincing about any subject before a crowd, not through instruction but by persuasion?" And typically obtuse, Gorgias answers, "Certainly" (241).

> *Socrates:* Well, you said just now that a rhetorician will be more persuasive than a doctor regarding health.
>
> *Gorgias:* Yes, I said so, before a crowd.
>
> *Socrates:* And before a crowd means among the ignorant, for surely, among those who know, he will not be more convincing than the doctor. (241–42)

Again Gorgias willingly assents: "You are right." And after a few more preliminaries comes the grand indictment:

> *Socrates:* Is not the position of the rhetorician and of rhetoric the same with respect to other arts also? It has no need to know the truth about things but merely to discover a technique of persuasion, so as to appear among the ignorant to have more knowledge than the expert? (242)

Just as Gorgias's denseness is a tipoff to the great irony of this drama, so is the unthinkable instance when Socrates himself, the great logician and dialectician, commits a blatant fallacy, that of equivocation. The argument goes like this: the person who has learned carpentry is a carpenter; a person who has learned music is a musician; the person who has learned medicine is a physician. And thus, says Socrates, "[A]ccording to this principle he who has learned justice is just" (243). The switch in grammar from nominals (carpenter, musician, physician) to the adjective "just" is the point at which Socrates equivocates and thus obviously destroys his own argument, for carpenter, musician, and physician can all be *just*: the just carpenter, musician, and physician. They can all be *eloquent* or *persuasive* as well, and we would choose a *just* and competent physician over one who is unjust, as we would value an *eloquent*, just, and competent physician over one who was mute. Which is of more value to society, the just and able statesman who is tongue-tied or the just and able statesman who is eloquent?

We cannot believe that Plato was unaware of how he had deconstructed his own argument, particularly since we find the same ironic technique in the *Phaedrus*, to which we will soon turn.

Once Socrates has trapped Gorgias into admitting that rhetoric has no subject matter and is nothing more than flim-flam, the next step is to demonstrate that rhetorical skill, which Gorgias values so highly, is really just a knack for flattery, not a complex art. Socrates appears to relent a bit when he admits to Polus that rhetoric produces gratification and pleasure, but Polus is as gullible as Gorgias. The next step, however, is to equate rhetoric with cookery, which also gratifies and pleases.

> *Socrates:* Well, then, Gorgias, the activity as a whole, it seems to me, is not an art, but the occupation of a shrewd and enterprising spirit, and of one naturally skilled in its dealings with men, and in sum and substance I call it "flattery." Now it seems to me that there are many other parts of this activity, one of which is cookery. This is considered an art, but in my judgment is no art, only a routine and a knack. And rhetoric I call another part of this general activity, and beautification, and sophistic—four parts with four distinct objects. Now if Polus wishes to question me, let him do so, for he has not yet ascertained what part of flattery I call rhetoric. He does not realize that I have not yet answered him, but proceeds to ask if I do not think it something fine. But I shall not answer whether I consider rhetoric a fine thing or a bad until I have first answered what it is. For that is not right, Polus. Then if you wish to question me, ask me what part of flattery I claim rhetoric to be.
>
> *Polus:* I will then; answer, what part?
>
> *Socrates:* I wonder whether you will understand my answer. Rhetoric in my opinion is the semblance of a part of politics.
>
> *Polus:* Well then, you do call it good or bad?
>
> *Socrates:* Bad—for evil things I call bad—if I must answer you as though you already understood what I mean. (245–46)

If the *Gorgias* is not deeply ironic, then we must conclude that Plato damns rhetoric as mendacious and hollow; it is a mere knack, not an art. However, such an interpretation is, as we have shown, clearly a misreading, just as interpreting "A Modest Proposal" as an argument in favor of butchering children would be a misreading. To miss the irony of the *Gorgias* is to lose its real power, the essential questions that it raises. Is rhetoric an art or merely a knack? (If it is an art, it can be taught, as are the other arts: music, sculpture, painting.) Is rhetoric base or noble? (If it is noble, it is worth teaching.) What is the subject matter of rhetoric? (Like painting, sculpture, and music, it is an architectonic, creative art, not a subject like history or biology. Of course, rhetoric can be the subject matter of a historical inquiry.)

In the *Gorgias*, Plato obviously does not condemn rhetoric; he saves it from cheapening by quacks. In the *Phaedrus*, as Jasper Neel has convincingly argued, Plato, who transforms the dynamics of oral, face-to-face argument into static, page-bound, literate dramas, ironically attempts to deny literacy its generative power. He who uses literacy so brilliantly tries to pull the ladder up behind himself, so that no one else can scale the tower of which he has taken possession.[2]

In outline, the *Phaedrus* is clearcut. On a stroll in the countryside with Socrates, Phaedrus mentions that he has heard a brilliant speech by Lysias, praising the nonlover over the lover. It so happens that Phaedrus has a copy of the speech, which he reads to Socrates. The nonlover is prudent and cautious, not distracted from affairs as is the passionate lover. The lover is jealous and prevents his beloved from associating with other men, thus depriving the boy of the manly companionship that will help him form his character. The lover is moved by physical passion, not character; thus friendship may well end once the passion has been satisfied. And so on.

Phaedrus is ecstatic over the speech, but Socrates mocks him: the speech was "[A]mazingly fine indeed, my friend. I was thrilled by it. And it was you, Phaedrus, that made me feel as I did. I watched your apparent delight in the words as you read. And as I'm sure that you understand such matters better than I do, I took my cue from you, and therefore joined in the ecstasy of my right worshipful companion" (482). In fact, says Socrates, the speech, though eloquent, was hollow and unoriginal.

Socrates undertakes to deliver a more inventive, original speech on the nonlover, but, he says, "I shall cover up my head before I begin; then I can rush through my speech at top speed without looking at you and breaking down for shame" (484).

The nonlover that Socrates portrays is not merely disinterested, but evil. He is a slave to pleasure, and anyone better than he is hateful; thus, he chooses for a lover, not an equal, but an inferior. The lover then isolates the beloved, keeping him from associations that would "make a man" of him. In fact, the lover pursues

> a weakling rather than a sturdy boy, one who has had a cozy, sheltered upbringing instead of being exposed to the open air, who had given himself up to a soft unmanly life instead of the toil and sweat of manly exercise, who for lack of natural charm tricks himself out with artificial cosmetics, and resorts to all sorts of other similar practices which are too obvious to need further enumeration. (487)

The lover would want to isolate the beloved from family and friends, for they would stand in the way of the relationship. The lover becomes compulsive, demanding the presence of the beloved day and night, "driven on by a compelling goading power, lured by the continual promise of pleasure in the sight, hearing, touching, or other physical experience of the beloved" (487). And Socrates ends the oration with this telling proverb: "As wolf to lamb, so lover to his lad" (488).

The speech by Phaedrus, then, was in behalf of the disinterested lover; Socrates's counter-speech portrayed the evil lover. In a third speech, however, Socrates explains noble love, which is not prudent and cool and not exploitative, but is a kind of divine madness, a gift of the gods. The oracles, such as that at Delphi, have, in their madness, "achieved so much for which both states and individuals in Greece are thankful" (491). When families suffer the consequences of some ancient guilt, madness often shows the way to purification and a release from the ills of the past. The third example of madness is worth thinking about, for it attributes poetry to divine inspiration and thus makes the poet into a sort of demigod whose art is sacred and beyond the grasp of laity.

> There is a third form of possession or madness, of which the Muses are the source. This seizes a tender, virgin soul and stimulates it to rapt passionate expression, especially in lyric poetry, glorifying the countless mighty deeds of ancient times for the instruction of posterity. But if any man come to the gates of poetry without the madness of the Muses, persuaded that skill alone will make him a good poet, then shall he and his works of sanity with him be brought to nought by the poetry of madness, and behold, their place is nowhere to be found. (492)

The noble lover is like the poet, inspired with a divine madness.

With the famous allegory of the charioteer, Plato carries his point further:

> The chariot is drawn by two winged horses, one of which is tractable and well-behaved, the other of which struggles against

> the charioteer. The first horse is reason, and the second is lust. It is the second horse that ruins Platonic love: So when they lie side by side, the wanton horse of the lover's soul would have a word with the charioteer, claiming a little guerdon for all his trouble. The like steed in the soul of the beloved has no word to say, but, swelling with desire for he knows not what, embraces and kisses the lover, in grateful acknowledgment of all his kindness. And when they lie by one another, he is minded not to refuse to do his part in gratifying his lover's entreaties; yet his yokefellow in turn, being moved by reverence and needfulness, joins with the driver in resisting. And so, if the victory be won by the higher elements of mind guiding them into the ordered rule of the philosophical life, their days on earth will be blessed with happiness and concord, for the power of evil in the soul has been subjected, and the power of goodness liberated; they have won self-mastery and inward peace. And when life is over, with burden shed and wings recovered they stand victorious in the first of the three rounds in that truly Olympic struggle; nor can any nobler prize be secured whether by the wisdom that is of man or by the madness that is of god. (501–2)

Following Richard M. Weaver in "The *Phaedrus* and the Nature of Rhetoric," we can equate the three lovers with the disinterested speaker or writer, who gives the "facts" and nothing but the facts, ma'am; the evil rhetorician; and the noble rhetorician. (Think, for example, of Wittegenstein, Hitler, and Martin Luther King, Jr.)

Now our story becomes a bit more tricky but also more interesting in terms of composition. As we have seen, Platonism entails the doctrine that there is ultimate truth, absolute meaning, attainable, if at all, only in the mind, not in the world of senses. In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates says,

> Of that place beyond the heavens none of your earthly poets has yet sung, and none shall sing worthily. But this is the manner of it, for assuredly we must be bold to speak what is true, above all when our discourse is upon truth. It is there that true being dwells, without color or shape, that cannot be touched; reason alone, the soul's pilot, can behold it, and all true knowledge is knowledge thereof. (494)

Plato's idealism is the basis for his infamous--and highly ironic—condemnation of literacy. Socrates tells Phaedrus that writing is dead, unable to respond; as a portrait is to a human being, so writing is to the living word of speech.

> *Phaedrus:* What sort of discourse have you now in mind, and what is its origin?

> *Socrates:* The sort that goes together with knowledge, and is written in the soul of the learner, that can defend itself, and knows to whom it should speak and to whom it should say nothing.
>
> *Phaedrus:* You mean no dead discourse, but the living speech, the original of which the written discourse may fairly be called a kind of image.
>
> *Socrates:* Precisely. And now tell me this. If a sensible farmer had some seeds to look after and wanted them to bear fruit, would he with serious intent plant them during the summer in a garden of Adonis, and enjoy watching it producing fine fruit within eight days? If he did so at all, wouldn't it be in a holiday spirit, just by way of pastime? For serious purposes wouldn't he behave like a scientific farmer, sow his seeds in suitable soil, and be well content if they came to maturity within eight months?
>
> *Phaedrus:* I think we may distinguish as you say, Socrates, between what the farmer would do seriously and what he would do in a different spirit.
>
> *Socrates:* And are we to maintain that he who has knowledge of what is just, honorable, and good has less sense than the farmer in dealing with his seeds?
>
> *Phaedrus:* Of course not.
>
> *Socrates:* Then it won't be with serious intent that he writes them in water or that black fluid we call ink, using his pen to sow words that can't either speak in their own defense or present the truth adequately. (521–22)

By one reading, we could say that Plato has climbed the tower of literacy and has then pulled the ladder up behind him. That is, he has used literacy to undermine literacy. But there is obviously another, ironic, reading, for which Plato gives always blatant clues. The husbandman would plant his seeds during the heat of summer and see them bloom in eight days "in a holiday spirit, just by way of pastime"; the seeker after truth likewise would sow his seeds through a pen "in a holiday spirit, just by way of pastime." When in earnest, the seeker after truth will not write, but will express himself through the living words of speech.

Are we to assume that Plato was so obtuse as *not* to perceive the logical impasse he had created for himself? The only other alternative is irony, which makes Plato a proponent of literacy, though uneasy in his stance. The ironic interpretation opens the *Phaedrus* up as a source for copious invention. Is there a mentally perceptible Truth? If so, how can it be expressed? What is the relationship between speech and writing?[3]

I would argue that Plato has had greater influence on the history of rhetoric and subsequently of composition/rhetoric than any other figure. Plato is the primal progenitor of Romanticism and the New Romantics in composition.

Aristotle, the Empiricist

We associate Plato with the ideal world and Aristotle with the real world. Plato would dream the Utopian Republic, and Aristotle would grapple with the politics and human relations of the here-and-now. As we have seen, Plato was skeptical of rhetoric, treating it ironically, tentatively, cautiously, suspiciously. Aristotle, in effect, tells us that rhetoric is the only game in town. He defines rhetoric as

> an ability, in each [particular] case, to see the available means of persuasion. This is the function of no other art; for each of the others is instructive and persuasive about its own subject: for example, medicine about health and disease and geometry about the properties of magnitudes and arithmetic about numbers and similarly in the case of other arts and sciences. (Kennedy, 36–37)[4]

In 367 B.C., at the age of seventeen, Aristotle (who was born in Stagiros in Northern Greece) became a student in Plato's academy. However, as his definition of rhetoric indicates, Aristotle ultimately departed significantly from the idealism of his teacher.

The contrast between Plato and Aristotle is best understood in terms of their theories of *invention* (i.e., their theories of how speakers and writers create or discover subject matter). For Plato, as we have seen, the ultimate goal of his "anti-rhetoric" was discovering the truth, an *ideal* that, paradoxically, had only psychological reality, habitation only in the mind of the seeker, essentially inexpressible *presence*. Thus, finally, Platonic invention would be directed inward, and terms such as "inspiration" and "creation" are virtual synonyms for invention. Aristotelian invention would be directed outward and can be associated with "discovery." Ultimately, two of the destructive schisms in the humanities can be related to Platonic creation and Aristotelian discovery:

Plato	*Aristotle*
creative writing	composition
imaginative literature	nonimaginative literature
(e.g., poems and fictional narratives such as novels)	(e.g., autobiography, biography, history, essays)

In its barest framework, here is the Aristotelian scheme of invention. The sources of subject matter are two: nonartistic and artistic. Nonartistic proofs are not invented by the speaker, but are simply there for the taking—for example, evidence from witnesses or written documents such as contracts. More interesting are the artistic proofs: *ethos,* based on the character of the speaker; *pathos,* based on the character of the audience; and *logos,* derived from the argument itself. Logical arguments are either *inductive,* based on examples, or *deductive,* proceeding from an enthymeme. Strictly speaking, an enthymeme is a truncated (or so-called "rhetorical") syllogism—for example, *Because Plato is an honorable man, he would not falsify the truth,* which can be stated as a complete syllogism:

> Honorable men do not falsify the truth.
> Plato is an honorable man.
> Therefore, he would not falsify the truth.

Actually, however, Aristotle uses the term enthymeme almost as we use "topic," in the sense of central point, as in "the *topic* of debate." Figure 1 shows an outline of Aristotle's conception of invention.

Whereas Plato was concerned with truth, Aristotle's rhetoric obviously centers on probabilities, for conviction involves not only the argument itself (i.e., "pure" dialectic), but the contingent human factors of the speaker's character and the nature of the audience. Thus, for instance, the speaker must convince the audience of her[5] honesty and her competence in the subject of her discourse and must consider the audience in framing the discourse.

Though I risk being too persistent, I restate the point that Aristotle brought rhetoric out of the Platonic tower and into the marketplace, the senate, and the law courts. In fact, says Aristotle,

> The species [*eide*] of rhetoric are three in number; for such is the number [of classes] to which the hearers of speeches belong. A speech [situation] consists of three things: a speaker and a subject on which he speaks and someone addressed, and the objective [*telos*] of the speech relates to the last (I mean the hearer). Now it is necessary for the hearer to be either a spectator [*theoros*] or a judge [*krites*], and in the latter case a judge of either past or future happenings. A member of a democratic assembly is an example of one judging about future happenings, a juryman an example of one judging the past. A spectator is concerned with the ability [of the speaker]. Thus, there would necessarily be three genera of rhetorics: *symbouleutikon* ["deliberative"], *dikanikon* ["judicial"], *epideiktikon* ["demonstrative"]. (47–48)

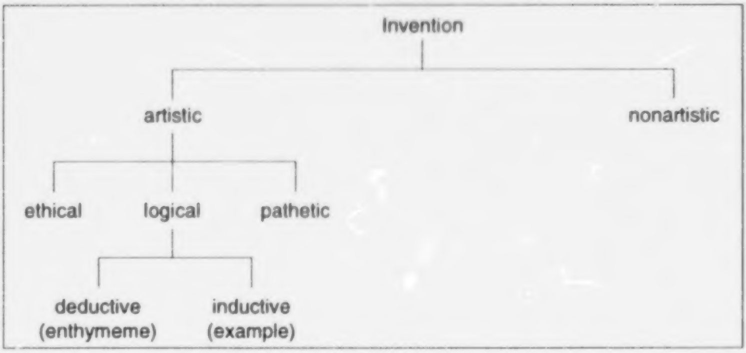


Fig. 1. Schematic of Aristotelian invention.

Furthermore, each of these belongs to an orientation in time: deliberative (regarding possible courses of action) to the future, judicial (regarding guilt or innocence) to the past, and epideictic (demonstrative or "show") to the present.

The *Rhetoric* consists of three books: I, definition of rhetoric and discussion of "topics" useful in deliberative, judicial, and epideictic rhetoric; II, the nature of the audience, use of emotions, and further discussion of logical argument; III, style. The third book begins thus:

> Since there are three matters that need to be treated in discussion of speech—first, what will be the sources of *pisteis* [[proofs]], second concerning the *lexis* [[style]], and third how the parts of a speech must be arranged—an account has been given of the *pisteis,* including the fact that they are drawn from three sources and what sort of things these are and why there are only these [three]. (All people are persuaded either because as judges they themselves are affected in some way or because something has been logically demonstrated.) An account also has been given of enthymemes and where they are to be found. (There are on the one hand species [*eide*] of enthymemes and on the other hand there are topics.) The next subject to discuss is *lexis;* for it is not enough to have a supply of things to say, but it is also necessary to say it in the right way, and this contributes much toward the speech seeming to have a certain quality. (217)

So while Plato questioned the ethics of rhetoric and the very possibility that rhetoric is an art, Aristotle firmly established the *art* of rhetoric.

Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is the basis for a tradition that includes the following assumptions: (1) that rhetoric is an art and that it can be taught and (2) that subject matter can be discovered in the world (physical, noetic, historical) around us. To Aristotle we owe the common (and useful) division of the art of rhetoric (as it relates to composition) into Invention (discovering subject matter through research, brainstorming, various heuristics), Arrangement (form, organization, coherence, cohesion), and Style (diction, sentence structure, figurative language).

Isocrates, the Skeptic

Though standard reference sources such as the *Britannica Macropaedia* do not list Isocrates among the chief Sophists (Protagoras, Gorgias, Antiphon, Prodicus, and Thrasymachus), his epistemology is sophistic, and his influence on the history of education was massive. That cluster of terms, the adjective "sophistic" and the nouns "sophist" and "sophistry," are, of course, disastrously loaded. *The American Heritage Dictionary,* for instance, defines "sophistry" as "1. A plausible but misleading or fallacious argument. 2. Plausible but fallacious argumentation," definitions that result from Plato's and Aristotle's intoxication with truth and antipathy for the contingent. For Protagoras and his fellows, however, "sophist" meant something like "teacher." The Sophists were, indeed, teachers, not only of oratory, but also of grammar, the nature of virtue, poetry, music, mathematics, astronomy, and physical sciences, and, since they prepared their students for active civic life, they were in great demand during the chaos that ensued after the death of Pericles in 429 B.C. According to Marou, the Sophists made education predominantly literary, using poetry as the basis for studying the relationship between thought and language, a turn that redirected the course of education in the West (54–57). With the Sophists, literature became central to education, and it has maintained that place even to the contemporary American secondary school, college, and university. (Throughout their years of education, students take more English courses than any others, and English pretty much means "imaginative literature.")

Both the *Phaedrus* and the *Gorgias* demonstrate Plato's attitude toward the Sophists and explain the degradation of sophistry throughout history. Indeed, a foundationalist like Plato, one who believes that there is an ultimate truth or reality, would have little patience with the Sophists, for their epistemology is relativistic, though only Protagoras and Gorgias were radically skeptical, Gorgias claiming that nothing exists; or if it does exist, it can't be known; or if it does exist and can be known, it can't be communicated to another.

Born to a wealthy family just before the Peloponnesian War (431–404 B.C.), Isocrates (436–388 B.C.) was old enough to experience the chaos and gloom of the period following the death of Pericles, leader of Athens during its most dazzling period. When Isocrates was fourteen years old, the citizens of the Athenian democracy voted to execute all the male inhabitants of the Thracian village Scione. Such events, as well as the unstable conditions in his city-state, must have contributed to his skepticism regarding the eternal verities of democratic government, human conduct, and cabbages and kings, but this very uncertainty, as we shall see, gives his works and his philosophy a human quality that is lacking in the absolutist doctrines of Plato.

Greatly influenced by Gorgias, who was his teacher, Isocrates emulated the grand style of his master and adopted his Panhellenic political philosophy, advocating the union of Athens and Sparta in a war against Persia and the settlement of impoverished peoples in the Persian territory. More significantly, Isocrates became the primary representative of sophistry for the generations to follow—paradoxically, in that one of his most renowned works is "Against the Sophists," a treatise that attacks the charlatans who treat rhetoric as cut-and-dried, very much as modern teachers have used the five-paragraph essay:

> For they are themselves so stupid and conceive others to be so dull that, although the speeches which they compose are worse than those which some laymen improvise, nevertheless they promise to make their students such clever orators that they will not overlook any of the possibilities which a subject affords. More than that, they do not attribute any of this power either to the practical experience or the native ability of the student, but undertake to transmit the science of discourse as simply as they would teach the letters of the alphabet. (169)

From the *Antidosis,* we can extract both the theory and the application of Isocrates's doctrine of rhetoric, and Isocrates can represent sophism in general.

Isocrates states flatly that "the power to speak well is taken as the surest index of a sound understanding" (327), precisely because composing (the speech) is dialectical: one must find arguments that will convince the audience and then think of the counterarguments that might be advanced. For Isocrates, the composing process and the thought process were identical, "for the same arguments which we use in persuading others when we speak in public, we employ also when we deliberate in our own thoughts"[6] (327). The stress on eloquence, of course, makes Isocrates vulnerable to the charge that he advocated style over substance—that he was a classical Euphuist.

However, it is a second doctrine that makes Isocrates most vulnerable to Idealists like Plato: his denial that there is *a* foundation, an ultimate truth. As Isocrates defines "philosophy," it is not the search for an absolute, but the ability to cope with the events in an ever-changing, uncertain world.

> [S]ince it is not in the nature of man to attain a science by the possession of which we can know positively what we should do or what we should say, in the next resort I hold that man to be wise who is able by his powers of conjecture to arrive generally at the best course, and I hold that man to be a philosopher who occupies himself with the studies from which he will most quickly gain that kind of insight. (335)

This view of knowledge, at the antipodes from that of Plato and, for that matter, Aristotle, opens Isocrates and the other Sophists to the accusation that they are interested merely in winning arguments by whatever means, not in finding the truth. On the other hand, Platonic absolutism results in a kind of frigid righteousness of the sort that we discovered in both the *Phaedrus* and the *Gorgias*, the vastly superior Socrates systematically dismantling the pseudo-logic of his Sophist opponents and, in the process, degrading them.

With a relatively brief example, the we can grasp the tone and method of Isocrates's sophism.

The Athenian general Timotheus, who had been one of Isocrates's pupils, had pursued a distinguished career, capturing various important cities for Athens, but he ultimately was tried for treason and was, according to Isocrates, "fined a larger sum than anyone in the past had ever been condemned to pay" (259). Now in levying judgment, Plato would have relied on a binary dialectic: either Timotheus was a bad person who deserved shame and ignominy, or Athenians had falsely accused and convicted him and were thus unjust. However, such is not the sophistic method. In effect, Isocrates argues that in judging Timotheus, the Athenians should have considered his years of service to the city-state and his exemplary record for most of his career; on the other hand, the Athenians were not entirely at fault since Timotheus was to some degree responsible for the judgment passed on him.

> It is true that if you consider the actions of the city by the standard of pure justice [*i.e.*, by an Idealist standard], no one of you can avoid the conclusion that her treatment of Timotheus was cruel and abominable; but if you make allowance for the ignorance which possesses all mankind, for the feelings of envy that are aroused in us, and, furthermore, for the confusion and turmoil in which we live, you will find that nothing of what has been done

> has come about without a reason nor does the cause lie outside our human weakness, but that Timotheus, also, has been responsible in some degree for the mistaken judgements [*sic*] passed upon these things. (259)

Certainly this kind of argument is more of this world than the arguments that we find in the Platonic dialogues.

Finally

As Yameng Liu points out,

> Whether the *telos* of the discourse is a set of transcendental "ideas" or of "forms" immanent in "nature," or whether its achievement is through a divine inspiration or though rational work, the dynamics of invention for both Plato and Aristotle (as the author of the *Poetics*) is just the same striving to discover a hidden "ultimate reality." (22)

So for Plato and Aristotle, *invent* is almost synonymous with *discover*, and not until Romanticism flowered did the family of terms associated with *creativity* (genius, imagination, fancy) denote and connote the "making" of poems and other works of art. To be truly creative, the poet must bring forth the completely new, that which does not exist in Nature or the Supernatural. In the next chapter, "Where We Come From," I briefly tell the story of how *invention* becomes *creativity*, and in the chapter following that, "Where We Are Now," I analyze the consequences for composition.

Notes

1. Dialectic proceeds to its conclusion through a process of question and answer. For Plato, the goal of dialectic was to reduce the chaotically multiple to the systematic one.

2. For my interpretation of the body of the *Phaedrus*, I rely heavily on Richard Weaver; for my reading of the conclusion, I expropriate Jasper Neel.

3. These questions, among others, are part of the *deconstructionist* project, which has had a major influence on composition/rhetoric in the last decade or so. See Crowley, *A Teacher's Introduction to Deconstruction*, and the last chapter of the present book.

4. All quotations of the *Rhetoric* are from Kennedy's translation. The interpolations in single brackets are Kennedy's; those in double brackets are mine.

5. The feminine pronoun signals that I am now able to universalize, for though Aristotle certainly was addressing men only, his principles apply to rhetoric in general, even unto our own troubled days.

6. Is it unreasonable to call Isocrates the proto-deconstructionist? In "Force and Signification," Derrida said, "To write is to know what has not yet been produced within literality has no other dwelling place, does not await us as prescription in some *topos ouranios*, or some divine understanding. Meaning must await being said or written in order to inhabit itself, and in order to become, by differing from itself, what it is: meaning" (11).

Suggested Readings

Bizzell, Patricia, and Bruce Herzberg, eds. *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*. Boston: Bedford, 1990.

A large book containing generous excerpts from primary rhetorical documents and covering the whole sweep of rhetoric from the pre-Socratics to poststructuralism.

Murphy, James J., ed. *A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric*. Davis, CA: Hermagoras, 1983.

A reliable, readable 200-page history of classical rhetoric.

Neel, Jasper. *Plato, Derrida, and Writing*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988.

A revolutionary argument that links composition theory, deconstruction, and classical rhetoric, providing a critique of and introduction to both Plato and Derrida.

Weaver, Richard. "The 'Phaedrus' and the Nature of Rhetoric." *The Ethics of Rhetoric*. Chicago: Regnery, 1953; Gateway paperback ed., 1965.

A classic explication of the *Phaedrus*.

2 Where We Came From

As we have seen, the empirical tradition goes back to Aristotle, and the transcendental tradition stems from Plato through Plotinus and others. The end of the Platonic road can be the Nietzschean sublunary hell, in which the *Übermensch* looks disgustedly at the agora, now populated by *poseurs* and noxious flies.

> Where solitude ceases, there the market-place begins; and where the market-place begins, the uproar of the great actors and the buzzing of the poisonous flies. . . . The people have little idea of greatness, that is to say: creativeness. . . . A truth that penetrates only sensitive ears [the actor, the *poseur*] calls a lie and a thing of nothing. Truly, he believes only in gods who make a great noise in the world. (78)

The end of the Aristotelian road can be crass materialism and utilitarianism, craft and craftiness devoid of spirit and joy. Some in composition/rhetoric have followed the Platonic, idealist road to its disastrous end, and some have taken the Aristotelian, realist way to the calamity of hucksterism. I will not deal with these aberrations but will explain the historical context in which substantial members of our field work.

The story begins with Plato, continues with Plotinus, and takes an important turn with the German idealists, but life—and the time I can ask you to devote to my argument—being short, I will arbitrarily begin the tale at 1776, a date momentous for two reasons, the one that concerns us now being the publication of George Campbell's *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. And I will chart the history in terms of four major figures: Campbell, Hugh Blair, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and Ralph Waldo Emerson. I must, however, state a disclaimer. I am not tracing the influence of one figure or another—though such influence undoubtedly occurred, as, for instance, Emerson's use of Coleridge.

I would like to start with images. Before the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the rhetorician-humanist conversed in the agora and spoke in the Senate; after this period, the humanist was no longer a rhetorician in the traditional sense, and *he* tended to ponder alone, withdrawing from the parlor to his upstairs room.

Campbell and Blair: Creativity and Taste

The Philosophy of Rhetoric, by George Campbell, was reprinted at least forty-two times after its original appearance in 1776 and was an often-adopted and influential text for college courses in oratory, composition, and criticism during the nineteenth century (Bitzer, vii). Our primary interest in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* is twofold: (1) the fact that it turned rhetoric inward, to the rhetor's own mind, whereas only decades before Campbell, and since Aristotle, attention had been outward, surveying the acts, agents, scenes, agencies, and purposes in the agora; (2) from it stems much of the composition/rhetoric-handbook tradition.

But to begin at my arbitrary beginning. At long last, Hartley and Locke had figured out the workings of the human mind, and it remained only for this knowledge to be applied. George Campbell applied it most influentially. Since the mind works through faculties and by association, and since all minds are alike, the rhetor need only look inward, not outward, to find what have been traditionally called "pathetic" arguments. Invention can move from the agora to the ivory tower of the individual psyche, and rhetoric begins to be reduced to "creativity." As Sharon Crowley puts it in her important book *The Methodical Memory*, "For the first time in the history of rhetoric, the inventional process was focused solely on the individual creative mind of a rhetor working in relative isolation . . ." (32).

Here is the center of Campbell's gravity:

> It is [the author's] purpose in this Work, on the one hand, to exhibit, he does not say, a correct map, but a tolerable sketch of the human mind; and aided by the lights which the Poet and the Orator so amply furnish, to disclose its secret movements, tracing its principal channels of perception and action, as near as possible, to their source: and, on the other hand, from the science of human nature, to ascertain with greater precision, the radical principles of that art, whose object it is, by the use of language, to operate on the soul of the hearer, in the way of informing, convincing, pleasing, moving, or persuading. (lxvii)

The ends of speaking are "to enlighten the understanding, to please the imagination, to move the passions, or to influence the will" (1). What else could they be since the mind consists of the four faculties mentioned? And, of course, a *quality* has specific appeal to each faculty, thus:

understanding	perspicuity
imagination	"a lively and beautiful representation of a suitable object" (3)
passion	the sublime[1]
will	vehemence

When Campbell turns to usage and style, he must sound very much like some modern writers of composition textbooks. Usage should be reputable (that of the best writers and speakers), national (no foreignisms), and present (no archaisms). This doctrine of usage has had enormous influence—right down to contemporary handbooks.

The strictly rhetorical qualities of style are perspicuity, vivacity, elegance, animation, and music (216). Of these, the most important is perspicuity.

> Of all the qualities above mentioned the first and most essential is *perspicuity*. Every speaker doth not propose to please the imagination, nor is every subject susceptible of those ornaments which conduce to this purpose. Much less is it the aim of every speech to agitate the passions. There are some occasions, therefore, on which vivacity, and many on which animation of style, are not necessary; nay, there are occasions on which the last especially would be improper. But whatever be the ultimate intention of the orator, to inform, to convince, to please, to move, or to persuade, still he must speak so as to be understood, or he speaks to no purpose. (216)

As we shall see when we discuss, for instance, Peter Elbow and Frederick Crews, this inward-turning of rhetoric, which began so forcefully with Campbell, resulted in theories, doctrines, and methods of both the Romantics and the Current-Traditionalists in composition.

Even more important than Campbell, however, is Hugh Blair, who, in the 115 editions of *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783), tells students that logical and ethical disquisitions show man how to improve his "understanding in its search after knowledge, and the direction of the will in the proper pursuit of good. In these they point out to man the improvement of his nature as an intelligent being" (10). And this is a higher sphere than belles lettres.

> They open a field of investigation peculiar to themselves. All that relates to beauty, harmony, grandeur, and elegance; all that can sooth [*sic*] the mind, gratify the fancy, or move the affections, belongs to their province. . . . They strew flowers in the path of science. (10–11)

(Here's an image for you: an academic procession at a major university. Members of the English department, each with a large basket, lead the way, gaily strewing flowers in the path of the mathematicians, philosophers, physicists, and others who follow.)

Whereas Campbell's *Philosophy* is the result of an interesting mind, Blair's *Lectures* mirror complete banality; their worth is purely historical. And, of course, we must attempt to answer this question: "Why were they so influential for such a long time?"

Blair made the development (or refinement) of taste a central goal of the humanities. There are three sorts of pleasures: those of the senses are the lowest, and those of the intellect are the highest. The pleasures of taste are in the middle, higher than the senses, but lower than the intellect. I dwell on this point because the hierarchy that Blair sets up becomes an ongoing crisis in what I call English department humanities. That is, logical and ethical disquisitions are the foundation and superstructure of knowledge; belles lettres are the scrollwork and dadoes. In other words, the very foundation of the English department, imaginative literature, is, according to Blair, secondary to other bodies of knowledge—and this is the doctrine inculcated in composition for two or three generations of students.

Taste is "the power of receiving pleasure from the beauties of nature and art" (16). Its characteristics are delicacy and correctness (23). Now there are varying degrees of taste among *men*, and this variation results from nature and art. In other words, some people are just genetic slobs, and there's not much we can do about them. Others have the potential for developing refined taste, and art can help them. "For is there any one who will seriously maintain that the Taste of a Hottentot or a Laplander is as delicate and correct as that of a Longinus or an Addison?" (27)

The paradox of taste is, then, fascinating. People must have some kind of inborn capacity for good taste, else they cannot savor the finest pleasures of literature, but literature is the very basis of good taste. It would seem that a natural-born elite can find its heritage only in the literary canon. In a critique of Murray Krieger, Frank Lentricchia says,

> [T]he important consideration in the definition of art is not the traditional one of art's relationship to other human activities and the world of nature, but—a point taken too much for granted by too many theorists since Kant—the ways in which art is awesomely independent of nature and other "non-artistic" human processes. (216)

George Campbell and Hugh Blair were major influences in that revolutionary move toward awesome independence. The emerging problem for composition was just this: it was not, could not be, awesomely independent of nature and other "non-artistic" human processes; thus, in the emerging ethos and esthetic of the nascent English department, composition was debased.

Now, relying on the work of A. R. Kitzhaber, I would like briefly to sketch out the context of the humanities as they were developing in American colleges and universities during the nineteenth century, and I emphasize the point that Campbell and Blair were ubiquitous during this hundred years.

> The date is 1860. In *Education: Intellectual, Moral, Physical,* Herbert Spencer argues that the goal of education is to train the mind, not to provide specific skills or knowledge. However, the best mental training is not the classics, as had been the assumption for centuries, but science. One of the prime reasons for preserving classical humanities erodes.
>
> The date is 1862. The Morrill Act establishes Land Grant colleges and universities. Within five years, twenty-three states have founded institutions that are bound by law to teach agriculture, home economics, and military science. Most (or at least many) of the students in these new educational democracies gain their ideas of the humanities from Campbell's *Philosophy* or Blair's *Lectures.* "Rhetoric" really means "creativity"; either you have it or you don't, for it can't be taught; the function of literature is ornamental.
>
> The date is 1901—just one year into the new century. In "The Influence of Improvement in One Mental Function upon the Efficiency in Other Functions," E. L. Thorndike and R. S. Woodworth conclude that "skill in one function does not transfer to other functions unless there is a close similarity between the functions, and even then the amount of transfer depends directly on the degree of similarity" (Kitzhaber, 6). Studying the *Iliad* and learning Latin do not help one become a more successful agriculturalist.

The humanities are no longer central to education, but are peripheral. The prototypical English department fosters creativity, cultivates taste, and corrects themes.

Method

The psychologist-philosophers of the Enlightenment had determined the nature of the human mind: its structure consisted of faculties (reason, will, memory, imagination, and so on), and it worked by association of ideas. This being the case, rhetorical invention could be systematized, as in the works of Campbell and Blair, among others. In *The Methodical Memory*, Sharon Crowley explains that the theory of invention developed by rhetoricians of the Enlightenment and after (e.g., Richard Whately) was based on three assumptions about the human mind:

> [F]irst, that it could reliably investigate its own working; second, that when a mind was engaged with a specific problem, it worked in an organized linear sequence, moving from specific to general or from general to specific; and third, that the mind's sequential workings were accurately inscribed in memory and could be accurately reproduced on demand. . . . (12)

Coleridge, the enigmatic Titan of Romanticism and, during his early career, a thoroughgoing "methodist," explains that

> We immediately perceive that [the ignorant man's] memory alone is called into action; and that the objects and events recur in the narration in the same order, and with the same accompaniments, however accidental or impertinent, as they had first occurred to the narrator. The necessity of taking breath, the efforts of recollection, and the abrupt rectification of its failures, produce all his pauses; and with exception of the "and then," the "and there," and the still less significant "and so," they constitute likewise all his connections. (*The Friend*, 317)

In fact, this ignorant man doesn't understand method.

> Method becomes natural to the mind which has been accustomed to contemplate not things only, or for their own sake alone, but likewise and chiefly the relations of things, either their relations to each other, or to the observer, or to the state and apprehension of the hearers. To enumerate and analyze these relations, with the conditions under which alone they [are] discoverable, is to teach the science of method. (317–18)

Plato was, of course, a methodist, for he sought "a ground that is unconditional and absolute thereby to reduce the aggregate of human knowledge to a system" (326). And Coleridge gives us the Romantic, "methodical" reading of Plato:

> [T]he education of the intellect, by awakening the principle of method of self-development, was his proposed object, not any specific information that can be conveyed into it from without: not to assist in storing the passive mind with the various sorts of knowledge most in request, as if the human soul were a mere repository or banqueting-room, but to place it in such relations of circumstances as should gradually excite the germinal power that craves no knowledge but what it can take up into itself, what it can appropriate, and reproduce in fruits of its own. (333–34)

Method has two implications that interest us. First, it implies the systematization of invention: choose a subject, narrow it to a topic, develop a thesis, outline your ideas. . . . Second, it solipsizes invention. Thus, method is *one of* the reasons for the systematization of invention in current-traditional textbooks (e.g., choose a subject area, narrow it to a topic, develop a thesis, outline, and so on) and the solipsism of invention in Romantic textbooks (e.g., freewriting).

Coleridge and Emerson: Bifurcated Transcendentalism

I would not presume to tell you anything new about Coleridge and Emerson, but I do want to remind you of what they had to say, and I will put my own interpretation on their doctrines.

It is important to note that Campbell and Blair are the progenitors of *composition*/rhetoric but that they had little influence on the development of literary theory and history. That is, while *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* and *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* were forming the attitudes of the laity toward literature and, more broadly, toward creativity and oral and written rhetoric, Coleridge and Emerson carried the tradition forward in the ever-more-isolated world of literature.

Coleridge might be called the father of literary theory. As Engell and Bate say, "Time and again he returns to philosophy as the foundation of criticism" (lxviii). He was also responding to the crisis of a Britain that had become a world power: practical, mercantile, empirical. One has only to glance through the essays on method in *The Friend* to see that Coleridge, like Campbell, is a direct descendant of the rationalist-associationist tradition. Shakespeare's genius, for example, consists in "method": "Speaking of the effect, *i.e.* his works themselves, we may define the excellence of their method as consisting in that just proportion, that union and interpenetration of the universal and the particular, which must ever pervade all works of decided genius and true science."

(323). The psychological method that Locke and Hartley had discovered was necessarily the same as both scientific and artistic method.

Of the paths that diverged in the agora many centuries before, Coleridge chose the Platonic route, and he viewed Plato as the Ur-methodist.

> For of Plato's works, the larger and more valuable portion have all one common end, which comprehends and shines through the particular purpose of each of several dialogue; and this is to establish the sources, to evolve the principles, and exemplify the art of method. (333)

From the standpoint of composition/rhetoric, Coleridge's historically momentous gambit was splitting the imagination. Whatever he intended—and one can debate that issue endlessly—nonetheless, he set up the conditions for ranking works as primarily and secondarily imaginative. The disastrous few words from *Biographia* are worth repeating:

> The *imagination* then I consider either as primary, or secondary. The primary *imagination* I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite *I am*. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially *vital*, even as all objects (*as* objects) are essentially fixed and dead. (304)

Engell and Bate give the standard interpretation of Coleridge's psychology of creativity:

> The secondary imagination creates new images and symbols and through these it reconciles the self-conscious mind to that picture of the world already formed involuntarily and provided by the primary imagination. The process of art joins nature with the self-conscious mind in one seamless product. The common man, equipped with only the primary imagination, cannot create (although he may appreciate) this complex and richer degree of imaginative vision. . . . [T]he primary imagination of the uneducated "rustic" supplies him with what has previously been created by the secondary imagination of poets and creative thinkers. Thus, social implications (or rather what one inherits and cultivates in talent and genius, not in birth or wealth) become germane to any theory of language and diction. (xc–xci)

Coleridge, then, provides the philosophical and spiritual basis for the two great splits in English department humanities: the one between "imaginative" and "non-imaginative" literature and the other between "creative" writing and composition.

Ralph Waldo Emerson is the great solipsizer. As McAleer argues, Emerson believed in the Neoplatonic concept that the soul contains all knowledge (156–57). It's in there, and all you have to do is get it out. "To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you is true for all men—that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense . . ." ("Self-Reliance," 145). Emerson also followed Coleridge in splitting the imagination, thus naturalizing the most destructive of the Romantic doctrines inherited by English department humanities. "Commodity" (7–9) is not only a restatement of the *common interpretation* of primary imagination, the workings of which result in useful arts, sense experience, and technology, but also a flowering of the Romantic elitism to which Nietzsche gives the ultimate expression.

> Under the general name of commodity, I rank all those advantages which our senses owe to nature. This, of course, is a benefit which is temporary and mediate, not ultimate, like its service to the soul. Yet although low, it is perfect in its kind, and is the only use of nature which all men apprehend. (7)

"Beauty" (9–14) is the Emersonian version of secondary imagination. "The presence of a higher, namely, of the spiritual element is essential to its perfection" (11). Beauty is any man's for the asking, but "he may creep into a corner, and abdicate his kingdom, as most men do . . ." (11). (And in this statement, we sense the Romantic scorn for those who lack the sensitivity of the elect. Of course, you've also got to be intelligent to appreciate beauty because "[T]he intellect searches out the absolute order of things as they stand in the mind of God, and without the colors of affection" [13].)

Finally, we need Emerson's image of the American genius, the American poet. These elect souls "are lonely; the spirit of their writing and conversation is lonely; they repel influences; they shun general society; they incline to shut themselves in their chamber in the house, to live in the country rather than the town, and to find their tasks and amusements in solitude" ("The Transcendentalist," 94). That is, they shun the agora, with its actors and its poisonous flies. Would it be invidious to say that many of them retreat to the security of the English department?

The Bottom Line

The historical arithmetic in the discussion above yields the following sums:

1. "Literature" was redefined to mean narrative fictions, poems, and dramas, excluding nonfiction narratives and marginalizing essays. It followed that "creative" writing (of stories, poems, and plays) had more value than composing nonfiction narratives, essays, reports, and so on.
2. Rhetoric was psychologized. First method and then imagination replaced invention.
3. The doctrine of taste etherealized humane letters, removing them even farther from the agora, from the quotidian.
4. Coleridge split the imagination, creating the epistemological, psychological basis for the devaluation of nonfiction literature ("the literature of fact") and hence of composition.
5. Through Emerson's transcendental idealism, rhetoric was further solipsized. By the time Harvard instituted freshman English as a required subject in 1874, the groundwork for composition as an autonomous subject (and, subsequently, as a scholarly field) had been laid.

Note

1. "It is that pleasurable sensation which instantly ariseth on the perception of magnitude, or of whatever is great and stupendous in its kind" (3).

Suggested Readings

Berlin, James A. *Writing Instruction in Nineteenth-Century American Colleges.* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984.

A brief and now-standard history of its subject.

Crowley, Sharon. *The Methodical Memory: Invention in Current-Traditional Rhetoric.* Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990.

An account of how invention disappeared from rhetoric in the nineteenth century and an explanation of the persistence of current-traditional rhetoric.

Kitzhaber, Albert R. *Rhetoric in American Colleges: 1850–1900.* Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1990.

Identifies the origins of the freshman English course and traces its history through the last half of the nineteenth century.

3 Where We Are

I have somewhat perilously schematized the current field of composition/rhetoric as follows:

A. Current-Traditional Rhetoric
B. Romantic Rhetoric
C. Neo-Classical Rhetoric
D. New Rhetoric
E. New Stylistics

In the present chapter, I will characterize these "schools," explain their historical provenance, and, wherever appropriate, analyze representative textbooks. However, I must emphatically make two points: First, when I argue that a textbook, or elements of it, have evolved from a particular historical current, I am not equating the textbook with the originary texts from which it developed any more than I would equate a modern chemistry textbook with a treatise on alchemy. For example, probably the first "current-traditional" rhetoric textbook was Alexander Bain's *English Composition and Rhetoric* (1866), and though I classify Frederick Crews's *Random House Handbook* as current-traditional, the two books are as radically different from one another as are the psychology of Hartley or Locke and that of Robert Coles. Second, the books that I discuss are intelligently conceived and widely used.

I would be less than honest if I took the ethical stance of complete impartiality regarding the various "schools" of composition/rhetoric and the textbooks that I associate with those schools; anyone familiar with my work knows that I am classed as a "new rhetorician" and that I have argued vigorously against Romantic theory and practice. Readers should take my biases into consideration as I explain and evaluate, but they should also be aware that one can disagree with friends and sincerely admire those in the opposite camp from oneself. I have no whipping boys or girls.

Current-Traditional Rhetoric

The legacies of current-traditional rhetoric:

1. Style and form become pretty much the "all" of rhetoric.
2. Rubrics, such as the five-paragraph essay, make composition easier to teach.
3. Pedagogy becomes text-oriented, as opposed to process-oriented.
4. Instruction becomes bottom-up (from word to sentence to paragraph) rather than top-down (from purpose or intention to general plan to textual details).
5. Instruction becomes "methodical," a series of statements or injunctions leading students systematically through the composing process.
6. The classification of modes (description, narration, exposition, and argumentation or persuasion) becomes almost universal.
7. Rhetoric as the art of *public* discourse is abandoned, with the consequent diminution of such "genres" as argumentation and the abandonment of such quotidian forms as the letter and the formal report.
8. Correcting themes becomes the teacher's primary, if not exclusive, concern.

When the concept of the creative imagination (a spiritual gift not amenable to instruction) supplanted invention, methods of discovering subject matter—for example, the "topics" of Aristotle and Cicero—became useless, for there was no way to teach students to be imaginative or creative. In other words, that other revolution that began in 1776 stripped invention from the five departments (invention, arrangement, style, delivery, and memory) that had constituted the body of rhetoric since classical times, and there is still widespread distrust of such heuristics as the Pentad (see 73–75, this volume) and the tagmemic discovery procedure (see 50–51). Since delivery (voice, gesture) and memory were not germane to written discourse, rhetoric in the practice of composition came to consist of arrangement and style.

The Foundations of Rhetoric (1897), by Adams Sherman Hill, Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard, can serve as the archetype of the reconstituted rhetoric that prevailed in composition for half a century. Hill says,

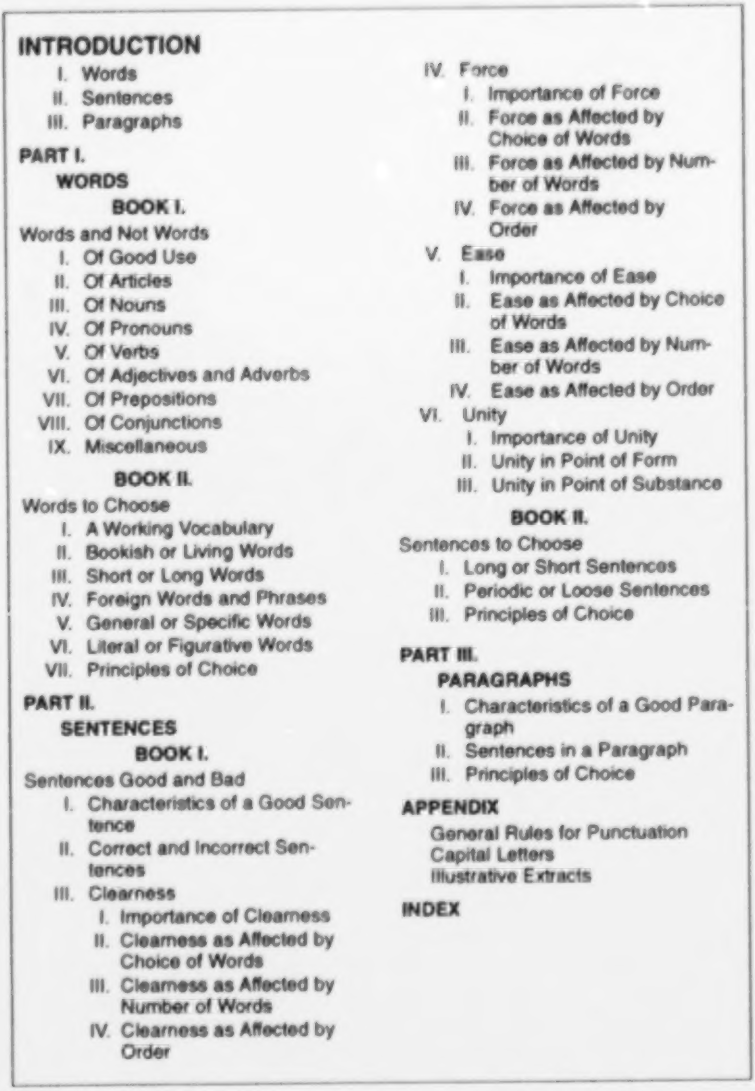
> Differ as good writers may in other respects, they are all distinguished by the judicious choice and the skillful placing of words. They all aim (1) to use no word that is not established as a part of the language in the sense in which they use it, and no word that does not say what they wish it to say so clearly as to be understood at once, and either so strongly as to command attention or so agreeably as to win attention; (2) to put every word in the place fixed for it by the idiom of the language, and by the principles which govern communication between man and man—the place which gives the word its exact value in itself and in its relations with other words; and (3) to use no more words than are necessary to effect the purpose in hand. If it be true that these simple principles underlie all good writing, they may properly be called *The Foundations of Rhetoric*. (iii)

Figure 2, Hill's table of contents, represents not only the structure of *The Foundations of Rhetoric* but the structure of current-traditional rhetoric in general.

The Foundations of Rhetoric is aptly titled, since it builds from the bottom up: first, learn how to use words, then learn to combine those words into sentences, and finally construct paragraphs from sentences. Unfortunately (as both common sense and the psychology of language indicate), the "building" metaphor is inappropriate for composition, which is not a bottom-up but a top-down process, beginning with some general idea or purpose and developing into a realized text, or at least a process in which top-down goals interact with bottom-up local details.

If the instructor cannot intervene in what is now called "prewriting," if the instructor's epistemology allows no such concept as "prewriting," and if style and form constitute the whole of rhetoric, then composition teaching is reduced very much to the correcting of errors once the "theme" has been submitted. The sampling of familiar symbols[1] in the columns below, commonly entered (in red or green) in the margins of student themes to indicate errors, are part of the legacy of current-traditional rhetoric:

1. agr
2. awk
3. cap
4. case
5. coh
6. cs
7. d
8. dm
9. frag
10. lc
11. mis m
12. mixed
13. no
14. pass
15. pl
16. poss
17. pr agr
18. pr ref
19. pr shift
20. run-on
21. spl inf
22. sing
23. sp
24. tense
25. trans
26. vague
27. wdy
28. //
29. con
30. dev



INTRODUCTION
- I. Words
- II. Sentences
- III. Paragraphs

PART I.

WORDS

BOOK I.

Words and Not Words
- I. Of Good Use
- II. Of Articles
- III. Of Nouns
- IV. Of Pronouns
- V. Of Verbs
- VI. Of Adjectives and Adverbs
- VII. Of Prepositions
- VIII. Of Conjunctions
- IX. Miscellaneous

BOOK II.

Words to Choose
- I. A Working Vocabulary
- II. Bookish or Living Words
- III. Short or Long Words
- IV. Foreign Words and Phrases
- V. General or Specific Words
- VI. Literal or Figurative Words
- VII. Principles of Choice

PART II.

SENTENCES

BOOK I.

Sentences Good and Bad
- I. Characteristics of a Good Sentence
- II. Correct and Incorrect Sentences
- III. Clearness
  - I. Importance of Clearness
  - II. Clearness as Affected by Choice of Words
  - III. Clearness as Affected by Number of Words
  - IV. Clearness as Affected by Order
- IV. Force
  - I. Importance of Force
  - II. Force as Affected by Choice of Words
  - III. Force as Affected by Number of Words
  - IV. Force as Affected by Order
- V. Ease
  - I. Importance of Ease
  - II. Ease as Affected by Choice of Words
  - III. Ease as Affected by Number of Words
  - IV. Ease as Affected by Order
- VI. Unity
  - I. Importance of Unity
  - II. Unity in Point of Form
  - III. Unity in Point of Substance

BOOK II.

Sentences to Choose
- I. Long or Short Sentences
- II. Periodic or Loose Sentences
- III. Principles of Choice

PART III.

PARAGRAPHS
- I. Characteristics of a Good Paragraph
- II. Sentences in a Paragraph
- III. Principles of Choice

APPENDIX

General Rules for Punctuation
Capital Letters
Illustrative Extracts

INDEX

Fig. 2. Table of Contents from Adams Sherman Hill's *The Foundations of Rhetoric.*

Nothing is more characteristic of current-traditional rhetoric than its division of the realm of discourse into four or five provinces, depending on which Lear cuts the map: description, narration, exposition, argumentation, persuasion, and poetry (though from the standpoint of composition, poetry is a semi-autonomous state). This classification is based on faculty psychology, according to which exposition appeals to the understanding, argumentation to reason, persuasion to the will, and poetry to the imagination. As Alexander Bain (1818–1903) explained the modes in *English Composition and Rhetoric*, first published in 1866,

> Those that have for their object to inform the Understanding, fall under three heads—*Description, Narration, and Exposition*. The means of influencing the *Will* are given under one head, *Persuasion*. The employing of language to excite pleasurable Feelings, is one of the chief characteristics of *Poetry*. The Will can be moved only through the Understanding or through the Feelings. Hence there are really but two Rhetorical ends. (19)

It is characteristic of current-traditional rhetoric that argumentation (which, in the faculty rubric, appeals to the reason) is either ignored or devalued. Until the Romantic revolution, argumentation and persuasion had been the heart of rhetoric; in the nineteenth century, the expository essay became the primary "mode" taught in composition classes.

It should be said that the modes, cut free of their pseudo-psychology, are a useful way to classify discourses in teaching. The aim of exposition is to explain, of argumentation to convince, and of persuasion to move to action. Both narration and description are used in all of these modes. After all, social scientists use narratives—case studies—to ground and explain their theories, and we might persuade you to join us for dinner at the Yang Chow restaurant by describing the slippery shrimp, Szechuan chicken, and dry-fried green beans with spiced pork.

No composition text currently in use—at least that I am aware of—could be classified as current-traditional, but aspects of many popular textbooks result from the current-traditional legacy, as is the case with *The Random House Handbook* (1992), by Frederick Crews, originally published in 1974 and now in its sixth edition.

As figure 3 shows, the "architecture" of the *Random House Handbook* has affinities with that of *The Foundations of Rhetoric*, by Adams Sherman Hill, for the books come from the same tradition.

His assumption being that students who learn to write essays can transfer those skills to other kinds of writing (4–6), Crews states immediately that his book centers on the essay,[2] "*a fairly brief piece of nonfiction that tries to make a point in an interesting way*" (4; emphasis his). The essay

Introduction

PART I EXPLORING PROSE STRATEGIES

1. Strategies of Description and Narration
2. Strategies of Analysis and Argument

PART II COMPOSING WHOLE ESSAYS

3. Planning an Essay
    - Topic
    - Thesis
    - Voice and Stance
    - Organizing
4. Supporting a Thesis
    - Making a Positive Case
    - Allowing for Disagreement
    - Dealing with a Text
5. Collaborating and Revising

PART III THE RESEARCH ESSAY

6. Finding and Mastering Sources
7. Documenting Sources
8. A Sample Research Essay

PART IV PARAGRAPHS

9. Paragraph Unity and Continuity

. . .

10. Paragraph Development
11. Opening and Closing Paragraphs

PART V SENTENCES

12. Writing Sentences

. . .

14. Sentence Emphasis and Variety

PART VI WORDS

15. Appropriate Language
16. Efficient Language
17. Figurative Language

PART VII USAGE

18. Complete Sentences
19. Joining Independent Clauses
20. Joining Subject and Verbs
    - Subject-Verb Coherence
    - Subject-Verb Agreement
    - Punctuation between a Subject and Verb
21. Modifiers
    - Degrees of Adjectives and Adverbs
    - Choosing and Placing Modifiers
22. Noun and Pronoun Case
23. Pronoun Agreement and Reference

. . .

24. Parallelism
    - Joining Parallel Elements
    - Punctuating Parallel Elements
25. Relations between Tenses

PART VIII PUNCTUATION

26. Periods, Question Marks, Exclamation Points

. . .

27. Commas
28. Semicolons and Colons

. . .

29. Dashes and Parentheses
30. Quoting
    - The Logic of Quotation
    - Incorporating a Quotation
    - Indenting a Quotation ("Block Quotation")
    - Introducing a Quotation
    - Omitting and Inserting Material
31. Forming and Spacing Punctuation Marks

PART IX CONVENTIONS

32. Verb Forms
33. Plural and Possessives

. . .

34. Spelling and Hyphenation

. . .

35. Capitals
36. Italics, Abbreviations, Numbers

PART X APPLIED WRITING

37. Examination and In-Class Essays
38. Business Letters and Facsimile Transmissions
39. Résumés

PART XI TOOLS

40. Writing with a Word Processor
41. An Index of Usage
42. Glossary of Terms

Fig. 3. Table of contents from Crews's *The Random House Handbook.*

can be in one of four modes: description, narration, "analysis" (his term for "exposition"), or argument, but he devotes a long chapter (153–232) to the research essay (a form of analytic writing) and includes a brief penultimate section on "Examination and In-Class Essays" (655–59), "Business Letters and Facsimile Transmissions" (660–69), and "Résumés" (670–72).

Crews's pedagogical stance is that of direct injunction, followed by explanation—for example:

> 1a. Aim for vividness in describing (9–13)
> 1b. Establish a descriptive point of view (13–16)
> 1c. Describe through a revealing action (16–17)

His explanation of the process of composing (again as a series of injunctions on which he elaborates) is "methodical" in ways that would be anathema to the Romantic view that the composing process is organic (vital) or the New Rhetorical beliefs in heuristics. For example, the section on "Planning an Essay" (53–91) begins with instructions for arriving at a thesis: "Recognize the difference between a subject area, a topic, and a thesis" (53). To emphasize the difference between Current-Traditional and Romantic Rhetoric in both epistemological assumptions and tone, I quote from Crews and then from Peter Elbow:

> *Subject Area*
> A *subject area* is a large category within which you hope to find your actual topic—the specific questions you will address. Thus, if you are asked to "recount a personal experience" or "discuss open admission to college" or "write an essay about *Catch-22*," you have been given not topics but subject areas: a personal experience, open admission to college, *Catch-22*.
>
> *Topic*
> The *topic* of an essay is the particular, focused issue or phenomenon being addressed. Thus, within the subject area "open admission to college," some workable topics might be:
>
> The effect of open admission on "high potential" students
> My debt to the policy of open admission
> Why did open admission become popular in the 1960s?
> The success (or failure) of open admission
> Is open admission a means to social equality?
>
> Notice that these topics take up considerably more words than "open admission to college." Potential "topics" that are expressed in few words may be subject areas in disguise.
>
> *Thesis*
> Your *thesis* is the one ruling idea you are going to propose *about* your topic. Thus a thesis is never material to be investigated. It is

> always an *assertion*—an idea you will support in the body of your essay. And because it always makes a claim, a thesis lends itself to expression in one clear sentence. (53–54)

Here, from Elbow's *Writing with Power*, is a Romantic's advice to students:

> The open-ended writing process is at the opposite extreme from the direct writing process. It is a way to bring to birth an unknown, unthought-of piece of writing—a piece of writing that is not yet in you. It is a technique for thinking, seeing, and feeling new things. This process invites maximum chaos and disorientation. You have to be willing to nurse something through many stages over a long period of time and to put up with not knowing where you are going. Thus it is a process that can change you, not just your words. (50)

Obviously, Crews and Elbow are worlds apart.

I am keenly aware that briefly characterizing a complex work, such as a composition textbook, entails the danger of misrepresenting the author's intention. Crews, an intelligent and informed author, does not believe that the composing process is as cut-and-dried as his schematization would imply. One of his injunctions tells students to "[R]ecognize the flexibility of the composition process" (56). And he goes on to explain that "though we will discuss composing as a logical sequence of steps, its actual order in any one instance defies summary. At nearly every point you are free either to move ahead or to reconsider a previous decision" (57).

Romantic Rhetoric

The legacies of Romantic Rhetoric:

1. Self-expression is exalted
2. Imagination (genius, creativity) replaces invention
3. Craft is devalued
4. Public discourse is devalued

The emergence of Romantic Rhetoric in composition is an interesting story that should be told in greater detail than is possible here. However, the route can be clearly enough traced even though scenes along the way do not gain the texture of detail.[3]

In chapter 2, "Where We Came From," we saw the internalizing of rhetoric, largely through the massive influence of rationalist psychology (e.g., Campbell) and German idealist philosophy (e.g., Coleridge).

The Romantic movement was a change in thinking—from the concept of a perfect universe ticking along like a clock, finished, static, to the concept of an organic universe, growing, changing. As Morse Peckham puts it,

> The new metaphor is not a machine; it is an organism. It is a tree, for example; and a tree is a good example, for a study of nineteenth-century literature reveals the continual recurrence of that image. Hence the new thought is organicism. Now the first quality of an organism is that it is not something made, it is something *being* made or growing. We have a philosophy of becoming, not a philosophy of being. Furthermore, the relation of its component parts is not that of the parts of a machine which have been made separately, i.e., separate entities in the mind of the deity, but the relation of stem to trunk to root to earth. Entities are an organic part of that which produced them. The existence of each part is made possible only by the existence of every other part. Relationships, not entities, are the object of contemplation and study. (10)

During the nineteenth century, rhetoric underwent mitosis, one of the resulting organisms fusing with poetic and the other developing into Current-Traditionalism, manifested almost exclusively in composition textbooks. The term "rhetoric" came to mean, actually, "composition." After the appearance of *The Elements of Rhetoric*, by Richard Whately, in 1828, no other important theoretical work bore the term "rhetoric" in its title. Composition/rhetoric—as in *The Foundations of Rhetoric*, by Adams Sherman Hill—was managerial and "methodical," dealing with style and form. Invention, as I have said, became "imagination" or "creativity" or "genius"—gifts that were inborn and would not be cultivated through instruction. Shelley's explanation of imagination in *A Defence of Poetry* (1821) is archetypical and well worth thinking about as a monument in the epistemological history of rhetoric:

> Poetry, in a general sense, may be defined to be "the expression of the imagination"; and poetry is connate with the origin of man. Man is an instrument over which a series of external and internal impressions are driven like the alternations of an ever-changing melody. But there is a principle within the human being, and perhaps within all sentient beings, which acts otherwise than in a lyre, and produces not melody alone but harmony, by an internal adjustment of the sounds and motions thus excited to the impressions which excite them. It is as if the lyre could accommodate its chords to the motions of that which strikes them in a determined proportion of sound, even as the musician can accommodate his voice to the sound of the lyre. (205)

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Romantic tradition first manifested itself in composition largely as a reaction against Current-Traditionalism. To convey a sense of what was happening during what might be called the "Romantic Revolution" of the 1960s and 1970s, I quote at length from Ken Macrorie, whose *Writing to Be Read* (1968) and *Telling Writing* (1970) are two of the most important books in the history of composition/rhetoric.

> In boldface type in this book, along with the usual examples of bad student writing, appear dozens and dozens of striking, delightful, moving pieces of writing.
>
> They were written in classes using the writing program presented here. Incredible. How could they have been written in the courses where those deadly things called themes came from, and those affected sentimental stories that end up on the student literary magazine that no one reads?
>
> The answer is that a New English movement has begun. It is like the New Math in that it allows students to use their own powers, to make discoveries, to take alternative paths. It does not suggest that the world can best be examined by a set of rules. It does not utilize the Errors Approach. It constantly messes around with reality, and looks for strategies and tactics that work. . . . The program gives the student first, freedom, to find his voice and let his subjects find him; and second, discipline, to learn more professional craft to supplement his already considerable language skills.
>
> And for both teacher and student, a constant reading for truth, in writing and commenting on that writing. This a hard requirement, for no one speaks truth consistently. A teacher must not insist that his students always write truths. As a human being he himself slips away from it frequently, and then his demand is hypocritical. . . .
>
> In the New English the teacher does not correct papers but reads them, along with other members of the class. He urges students to rewrite those papers worth the effort and to polish those already successful. ("Preface," *Telling Writing*, vii–viii)

It is hardly an exaggeration to call Macrorie the Jefferson of the Romantic Revolution in composition.

Most people enjoy some writing just because it's pleasurable to read. I know extreme liberals and rockbound conservatives who never miss George Wills's columns, in large part because they are elegant and witty. Regardless of one's epistemology or philosophy of composition, some of the textbooks by Romantics are enjoyable because they are gracefully and imaginatively written, as is the case with Ken Macrorie's work, William Coles's *The Plural I—And After*, and also *Writing without Teachers* (1973) and *Writing with Power* (1981), by Peter Elbow, whose

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books have been massively influential. Currently he is probably the most frequently cited source in composition/rhetoric.

Writing with Power, one feels, might have been co-authored by Emerson and Elbow as a counterstatement to Derrida, one of whose projects has been to "deconstruct" the Western metaphysic of presence: the belief that we can know an ultimate truth, the problem being to express it in words. To simplify a complex epistemology: Derrida argues that words are not merely the vehicles for a preexisting truth, but constitute that truth. Some time ago, I explained that

> In the Western tradition—from Plato to Walter Ong—writing has been considered the signifier (secondary) of the signifier (primary), which is speech. But Derrida argues that there is no *logos* behind the words. And suppose there were. How could you get at it except through language? So the problem is that meaning is built of *traces,* and traces are nothing but structures of differences and hence are not "something." ("Post-Structuralism and Composition," 82)

As Derrida says,

> It is because writing is *inaugural,* in the fresh sense of the word, that it is dangerous and anguishing. It does not know where it is going, no knowledge can keep it from the essential precipitation toward meaning that constitutes and that is, primarily, its future. . . . Meaning is neither before nor after the act. ("Force and Signification," 11)

Emerson, we know, would respond to Derrida with the famous dictum from "Self-Reliance": "To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you is true for all men—that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense . . ." (145). And Peter Elbow would second Emerson: "I've spent a lot of time in a debate with myself about whether it's better to work things out in the medium of words or in the medium of ideas and meanings. . . . After some cogitation, I came to decide that both levels are good, but for different purposes: perspective and immersion. Working in ideas gives you perspective, structure, and clarity; working in words gives you fecundity, novelty, richness" ("Cooking," 42–43). As Emerson put it, "The soul active sees absolute truth and utters truth, or creates" ("The American Scholar," 50).

This epistemology and philosophy lies behind the radical individualism of Romantic Rhetoric, particularly that of Peter Elbow, who places great value on the individual, "true" voices that he finds in student writing.

> That writing was most fun and rewarding to read that somehow felt most "real." It had what I am now calling voice. At the time I said things like, "It felt real, it had a kind of resonance, it somehow rang true."
>
> Sometimes these passages were short—a phrase or sentence in length—a kind of parenthetical aside or a digression in the middle of something else. Sometimes the passages were much longer. Sometimes it was a particular thought that had greater conviction, sometimes it was a particular feeling—an angry, happy, sarcastic, or even self-pitying observation—that somehow rang truer than its surroundings. Sometimes these passages with voice seemed good by other standards, sometimes they were not good writing at all. Sometimes they were bursts of sincerity, but not always. Sometimes I couldn't identify *anything* special about these passages in style or content. It was just that they seemed to jump out at me as though suddenly the writer had switched to a fresh typewriter ribbon. (*Writing with Power,* 283)

Thus, writing that manifests the ineffable, personal something that Elbow calls "voice" has greater value than writing in which he does not find that quality.

Elbow is widely known as the formulator and popularizer of what he calls "freewriting" as a means of overcoming writer's block and getting started. He explains thus:

> To do a freewriting exercise, simply force yourself to write without stopping for ten minutes. Sometimes you will produce good writing, but that's not the goal. Sometimes you will produce garbage, but that's not the goal either. You may stay on one topic, you may flip repeatedly from one to another: it doesn't matter. Sometimes you will produce a good record of your stream of consciousness, but often you can't keep up. Speed is not the goal, though sometimes the process revs you up. If you can't think of anything to write, write about how that feels or repeat over and over "I have nothing to write" or "Nonsense" or "No." If you get stuck in the middle of a sentence or thought, just repeat the last word or phrase till something comes along. The only point is to keep writing. (*Writing with Power,* 13)

The fact that so many composition textbooks include freewriting exercises is evidence of the usefulness with which it is viewed.[4]

Writing with Power explains five methods of composing:

1. *The two-step method* (8–11). In the first step, use your creativity to "be loose and accepting as you do fast early writing." In the second step, use critical thinking to revise (9).
2. *The direct writing process* (26–31). This is similar to the two-step method, perhaps a version of it. "Just divide your available time

in half. The first half is for fast writing without worrying about organization, language, correctness, or precision. The second half is for revising" (26).

3. *The dangerous method* (39–46). Try to get it right the first time.
4. *The open-ended writing process* (50–58). Here I must quote extensively in order to capture the "voice" of the author as he elaborates on a concept that obviously excites him: "It is a way to bring to birth an unknown, unthought-of piece of writing. . . . Thus it is a process that can change you, not just your words. . . . Ideally you should not choose in advance what you are going to end up with. . . . The open-ended writing process is ideal for the situation where you sense you have something to write about but you don't quite know what. Just start writing about anything at all. . . . Keep writing for at least twenty or thirty minutes. . . . Then stop, sit back, be quiet, and bring all that writing to a point. That is, by reading back or just thinking back over it, find the center or focus or point of those words. . . . Try to stand out of the way and let the center of focus itself decide how to come forward" (50–52).
5. *The loop writing process* (59–77). Based on the metaphor of an ocean voyage, this seems to be a variation on "the two-step method" and "the direct writing process." The voyage out is "directed freewriting," for which Elbow suggests thirteen procedures such as writing down one's first thoughts, starting with one's prejudices, writing conflicting ideas or prejudices as a dialogue, and using stories. The voyage home is focusing and revising.

If, at their worst, current-traditional texts read like the instructions for assembling a barbecue, Romantic texts are often almost ethereally general. Examples of Romantic aversion to nitty-gritty abound in *Writing with Power:*

> A sentence should be alive. Does it sag in the middle or trail off at the end? Is it fog or mush? Sentences need energy to make the meaning jump off the page into the reader's head. As writer you must embed that energy in the sentence—coil the spring, set the trap. . . . The best sentence is the kind that comes out during the best moments of raw first-draft writing. (136–37)

Without examples or explanations, however, one gains no idea of what Elbow means by a sentence that is alive, that makes the meaning jump off the page into the reader's head. Commenting on the chapter on revision (128–138), one critic remarked, "This is like a book on carpentry with no specific instructions or illustrations, just general maxims: choose good wood, make sure that joints fit."

A necessary criticism of Romantic Rhetoric, particularly as manifested in *Writing with Power*, is the tendency to do away with craft, as if writing were all inspiration and creativity. Throughout his work and in *What Is English?*, Elbow takes the view of writing as making meaning, discovering what one thinks, expressing one's true "voice."[5]

No one would deny the value of writing as a means of discovering what one thinks and what one is, as a powerful way to meditate, and as both the stimulus and the medium for creativity. However, as a master-term for reading and writing, "the making of meaning" is problematic.

In the first place, life itself is a meaning-making process. In living and loving, in day-by-day interactions with colleagues, in decisions about lifestyles and their relation to society and the physical environment—during virtually every moment of consciousness, we are making meaning. Writing is, to be sure, a powerful and important aspect of the meaning-making process, but, unlike meditations about the nature of life, writing is usually purposive: to explain the writer's ideas about politics, to get a rebate from an airline, to express love to a dear one, to surprise a friend. . . . Second, writing as "the making of meaning" is without craft, or, at the very least, devalues craft. Let me briefly elaborate on the obvious. If a writer is making meaning, he or she really can't project what needs to be done in order to make the writing at least communicative for some reader or group of readers. Third, writing as "the making of meaning" creates all sorts of problems in teaching. Students enroll for composition not to learn to make meaning, but to learn to write, and not to inscribe meditations or be surprised at what they have created during a session of freewriting; they legitimately want to master the sorts of writing that they will need in the academic world and outside the academy in their careers. Composition teachers also help students find the joy (and indeed the usefulness) of writing for self—to express, to discover, to fill idle hours—or, in other words, that they will on frequent occasion use writing simply to make meaning (or even to kill time). Most composition teachers also know and have experienced the real pleasure—even the joy—of a well-crafted, effective piece of everyday writing (such as a technical report, a letter of application, a scholarly paper); most composition teachers, I hope, show students how to experience this kind of humble, quotidian satisfaction. Dedicated carpenters, electricians, cooks, architects, painters, poets, composers—all are interested in craft and experience the pleasure of a job well done.

5

Neo-Classical Rhetoric

Some textbooks have great influence on both the theoretical and the pedagogical sides of composition/rhetoric—for example, Macrorie's *Writing to Be Read*, Elbow's *Writing without Teachers*, and Young, Becker, and Pike's *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change* (which we will discuss hereafter). Edward P. J. Corbett's *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* is another such textbook. First published in 1965, its third edition appearing in 1990, for more than a quarter of a century this book has been a major factor in the discovery of the classical tradition in composition/rhetoric.

By the time of Quintilian in the first century A.D., the superstructure of rhetoric, consisting of five "departments" or "canons," was pretty clearly defined: invention, arrangement, style, delivery, memory. Invention consisted of arguments pertaining to the subject itself (*logos*), arguments based on the character of the speaker (*ethos*), and arguments based on the nature of the audience (*pathos*), as in figure 4. Since delivery (voice, gesture) and memory are not germane to written composition, we are left with three departments—invention, arrangement, and style—and these serve as the organizing principle for Corbett's book, the chapters of which are "Introduction," "Discovery of Arguments" (i.e., invention), "Arrangement of Material," "Style," and "A Survey of Rhetoric." To convey a sense of Corbett's tone in the book, we quote his explanation of "The Three Modes of Persuasion":

> Aristotle said that we persuade others by three means: (1) by appeal to their reason (*logos*); (2) by appeal to their emotions (*pathos*); (3) by the appeal of our personality or character (*ethos*). We may use one of these means exclusively or predominantly, or we may use all three. Which of these means we will use will be partly determined by the nature of the thesis we are arguing, partly by current circumstances, partly (perhaps mainly) by the kind of audience we are addressing. Everyone develops some instincts for adapting means to fit the subject, occasion, and audience, but by experience and education some people so refine these instincts that their success in dealing with others can be attributed to an art rather than to a mere knack. And when persuasive activities approach the condition of art they can be said to fall within the province of rhetoric. (37)

Readings in *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, many of which are followed by rhetorical analyses, are unique in the breadth of history that they cover—for example, Homer, "The Envoys Plead with Achilles"; Socrates, "The Apology"; Edmund Burke, "Letter to a Noble Lord"; Matthew Arnold, "Literature and Science"; Henry David

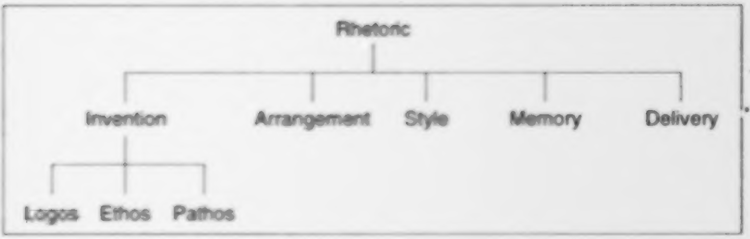


Fig. 4. The departments of rhetoric.

Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience"; Dorothy L. Sayers, "Are Women Human?"

It may be the case that Corbett's last chapter, "A Survey of Rhetoric," has been the most influential aspect of his book. In English departments, the traditional "homes" of composition, rhetoric and its history had been pretty much lost by the beginning of the twentieth century. Instructors and students who use *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* learn that for a millennium and more, rhetoric constituted the humanities. Whereas Macrorie's textbooks were revolutionary manifestoes, Corbett's book is conservative in the best sense, revitalizing a tradition and body of knowledge from which composition/rhetoric sprang and in which that field has its roots.

Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student is a counterstatement to both Crews, insofar as *The Random House Handbook* represents Current-Traditionalism, and to Elbow, insofar as *Writing without Teachers* and *Writing with Power* represent a turn from the rhetoric of the agora to a solipsistic rhetoric.

The New Rhetoric

The term "New Rhetoric" is in some senses misleading. Those theorists and practitioners whom I classify as "New Rhetoricians" have not discovered or developed a new art unrelated to and independent of classical rhetoric, but have brought new theories and practices to the field. In my brief outline of the history of composition/rhetoric, I argued that "Current-Traditional Rhetoric" focuses on style and form; Romantic Rhetoric focuses on the writer as a creative individual. New Rhetoric is traditional in its concern with the relationships among the author, his or her subject matter, and the audience (that is, *ethos, pathos,* and *logos*) and radical only in some of its methods and in the disciplines that it called on in theory building (e.g., linguistics, cognitive psychology).

In many ways, 1963 marked the beginning of the New Rhetoric. In that year, one could say that composition/rhetoric was a field with its own body of scholarship and, of course, with a history going back to the Greeks and Romans. Composition *as practice* had been established in the academy since the latter part of the nineteenth century, but until the 1960s, there really was no *discipline* in the sense of widely known bodies of scholarship, bibliographies, and groups of professionals who identified themselves with the discipline (as opposed to the practice).[6] In 1958, the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) provided massive sums for improving the scientific education of the nation's young people. Undoubtedly as a response to the exclusion of English from the NDEA, NCTE published *The National Interest and the Teaching of English* (1961), influencing Congress to extend funding for English through the Cooperative Research Program, established in 1954; the result was "Project English," enabling centers such as Nebraska and Oregon to develop curricula. But 1963 has come to be accepted as the natal year of composition/rhetoric. It was then that CCCC met in Los Angeles, and with the theme "Toward a New Rhetoric," Ken Macrorie, editor of CCC, published in the October issue of that year a group of papers from the meeting: among others, Albert R. Kitzhaber, "4C, Freshman English, and the Future"; Wayne C. Booth, "The Rhetorical Stance"; Francis Christensen, "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence"; and Edward P. J. Corbett, "The Usefulness of Classical Rhetoric." Also in 1963, NCTE published a work that Stephen North calls "the charter of modern Composition" (17): *Research in Written Composition*, by Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer. The next year, 1964, the NDEA was extended to include English, and the era of NDEA seminars for public school teachers was under way. Typically, during the summer, teachers studied literature, linguistics (or "language"), and some form of composition in classes taught by university faculty. As North says, "Federal interest in English *per se* on this scale was relatively short-lived, but the momentum generated by the intense interest of these few years launched modern Composition. The broadest effects were on English teachers' self-perception as professionals" (12). There was, however, a great irony: the commitment of these teachers was primarily to literature, and their training was in literature, but the "useful" subjects—linguistics and composition—were more likely to be funded.

In any case, 1963 is a convenient and logical date for marking the inception of the New Rhetoric, represented in textbooks by, among others, *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing.* I begin with Axelrod and Cooper's own statement about the New-Rhetorical nature of the book:

> When we first wrote *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing,* we tried to take the best that has been thought and said in the field of rhetoric and composition and turn it to practical use. We saw the *Guide* as continuing the classical tradition of treating rhetoric very seriously indeed, not just as a matter of producing correct, effective prose but as one of thinking, reading, and writing intelligently. To the best insights from that tradition, we added what we believed to be the most promising developments in the New Rhetoric. (iii)

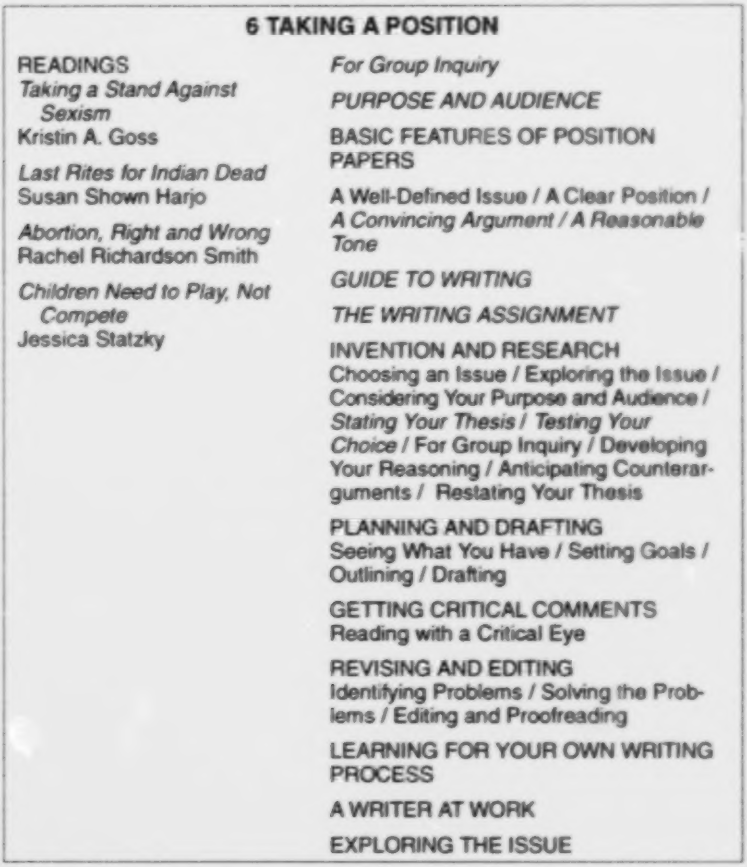
A shibboleth of the New Rhetoric is "Process, not product!" That is, composition should be more concerned with helping students create texts than with the flaws in the finished texts; teachers are to be coaches, not proofreaders. (Janet Emig's 1971 study *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders* not only signaled and symbolized the changed emphasis, but introduced case studies, a standard method of research in the social sciences, to scholarship in composition/rhetoric.) Figure 5, the detailed table of contents for chapter 6, "Taking a Position" (i.e., developing an argument), of the *St. Martin's Guide to Writing,* gives an idea of Axelrod and Cooper's process-orientation.

The chapter begins with readings—essays that exemplify the principles of argumentation or, in Axelrod and Cooper's terms, taking a position—followed by questions that encourage students to think about what Lloyd Bitzer, in a now-classic paper, called "the rhetorical situation," the audience, the purpose, the reason for the argument, and so on. For example, here is the first question following "Taking a Stand Against Sexism," by Kristin A. Goss:

> Because the essay was published in *The Crimson,* we know that Goss was writing specifically for her fellow Harvard students. What assumptions do you think she makes about her audience? Specifically, what values does she assume they share with her? (180)

As figure 5 indicates, the chapter guides students through the composing process, even to proofreading. If the chapter, and the book as a whole, has a fault, it is that the authors tend to portray the composing process as an algorithm carried out at the behest of injunctions:

> Begin by making a list of issues you might write about (199).
>
> Select an issue from your list that seems especially interesting, one that you would like to know more about (200).



6 TAKING A POSITION

READINGS

Taking a Stand Against Sexism
Kristin A. Goss

Last Rites for Indian Dead
Susan Shown Harjo

Abortion, Right and Wrong
Rachel Richardson Smith

Children Need to Play, Not Compete
Jessica Statzky

For Group Inquiry

PURPOSE AND AUDIENCE

BASIC FEATURES OF POSITION PAPERS

A Well-Defined Issue / A Clear Position / *A Convincing Argument / A Reasonable Tone*

GUIDE TO WRITING

THE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

INVENTION AND RESEARCH
Choosing an Issue / Exploring the Issue / Considering Your Purpose and Audience / *Stating Your Thesis / Testing Your Choice* / For Group Inquiry / Developing Your Reasoning / Anticipating Counterarguments / Restating Your Thesis

PLANNING AND DRAFTING
Seeing What You Have / Setting Goals / Outlining / Drafting

GETTING CRITICAL COMMENTS
Reading with a Critical Eye

REVISING AND EDITING
Identifying Problems / Solving the Problems / Editing and Proofreading

LEARNING FOR YOUR OWN WRITING PROCESS

A WRITER AT WORK

EXPLORING THE ISSUE

Fig. 5. Detailed table of contents for chapter 6 "Taking a Position" from Axelrod and Cooper's *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing.*

> Once you have examined the pros and cons of an issue, decide on the tentative position you take on the issue (201).

Two additional significant features mark *The St. Martin's Guide* as New Rhetorical: its emphasis on (1) group activity ("collaborative learning") and (2) invention.

In chapter 6, Jack Blum discusses the movement in composition/rhetoric generally called "social construction," which is only one manifestation of the shift in rhetorical theory from the Romantic image of the writer alone in his or her study to the image of the writer as a member of a community or multiple communities, the writing as much a product of the community as of the individual writer. Though Axelrod and Cooper are clearly not social constructionists, they do view the writer as a member of a rhetorical community (as a denizen of the agora), and the many suggestions for group work throughout their book are evidence of the New Rhetorical shift in emphasis. For example, from chapter 3, "Remembering People":

> At this point you might find it useful to get together in a group with two or three other students and run your chosen topics by one another. Assess the group's interest in the person you wish to write about, and invite their advice about whether he or she sounds promising. Does the subject seem likely to lead to an essay they would care to read? Your purpose is to determine whether you have chosen a good subject to write about and thus to be able to proceed confidently to develop your essay. (80)

As for invention, obviously Axelrod and Cooper repeatedly encourage students to think about *rhetorical stance* (Booth)—in classical terms *ethos* and *pathos*—but they also introduce a wide range of *heuristics*:[7] clustering, listing, outlining, cubing, dialogues, dramatizing,[8] quick drafting, journals, looping, questioning,[9] annotating, inventorying, and others.

All in all, *The Saint Martin's Guide* delivers on the promise made by its authors to take rhetoric, both traditional and modern, seriously.

Like Macrorie's *Writing to Be Read*, Elbow's *Writing without Teachers*, and Corbett's *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change*, by Richard E. Young, Alton L. Becker, and Kenneth L. Pike, has had a major impact on composition/rhetoric, and like a great many revolutionary books, this one has never been a bestseller.

In their preface, the authors explain that Pike was a linguist interested in the possibility that work in his field could serve as a basis for more effective instruction in composition; Young and Becker were teachers of composition "convinced that rhetoric was potentially an important part, perhaps the most important part, of a college student's education" (xii). The book in large part is, then, an application of linguistic theory—specifically, *tagmemics*—to composition/rhetoric.

Tagmemics is, to put the case most simply, a slot-filler method of linguistic analysis, based on the undeniable assumption that a language system is a hierarchical structure composed of complete but interrelated subsystems. For example, words are made up of morphemes: *sub-system-s, un-truth-ful*. Phrases consists of words: *your favorite food*. Sentences consist of phrases: Do not be untruthful about *your favorite food*. Paragraphs consist of sentences, and so on. Furthermore, alternative items can fill the slots: Do not be mendacious regarding *the eats you like best*. However, *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change* is not about linguistics; it is a composition textbook, using some of the premises of linguistic theory. The authors say,

> We laid the groundwork for the book by defining rhetoric much more broadly than it had been defined for many years. Rhetoric, we argued, is concerned primarily with a creative process that includes all the choices a writer makes from his earliest tentative explorations of a problem in what has been called the "prewriting" stage of the writing process, through choices in arrangement and strategy for a particular audience, to the final editing of the final draft. (xii)

The greatest impact of *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change* has been its introduction of Rogerian argument and the tagmemic heuristic. As we saw above, Kenneth Burke said, "You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his" (*Rhetoric of Motives*, 55–56). Rogerian argument is very much in this spirit of dialectic as opposed to debate in which one opponent wins and the other loses. Young, Becker, and Pike explain:

> The writer who uses the Rogerian strategy attempts to do three things: (1) to convey to the reader that he is understood, (2) to delineate the area within which he believes the reader's position to be valid, and (3) to induce him to believe that he and the writer share similar moral qualities (honesty, integrity, and good will) and aspirations (the desire to discover a mutually acceptable solution). (275)

These goals coincide nicely with the classical inventive triad. When writers try to convince readers that they (the writers) understand them (the readers), the writers are relying on *pathos*, argument based on the character of the reader. Staking out an area of agreement is *logos*, argument based on the nature of the nature of the subject under consideration. Convincing readers that the writer is honest and of good will is the argument based on *ethos*. (It is important to stress the continuity of theories and principles that the Rogerian argument so nicely illustrates; the classical tradition accommodates both Rogers and Burke.)

The most controversial aspect of *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change* is the tagmemic heuristic developed in it. Here is Young's explanation of heuristics in general:

> A "heuristic" . . . is a codification of a particular sort of cognitive skill; it is a plan designed to help one in carrying out complex, non-routine activities for which trial and error is undesirable or

> unmanageable, and for which we lack a rule-governed plan (even though it might be usefully developed) or for which a rule-governed plan would be impractical or impossible. It helps us translate knowledge about something into knowledgeable practice. (Young, 22)

The tagmemic heuristic is based on two assumptions: (1) To understand anything, you must know (a) how it differs from everything else in its class (*contrast*), (b) how much it can change and still be itself (*variation*), and (c) its place as a member of its class (*distribution*). (2) You can view anything as (d) a discrete entity (*particle*), (e) a process (*wave*), or (f) a system (*field*). Thus, as a simple example, you can characterize a condominium—from the standpoint of *contrast*—by noting the features that make it differ from an apartment house, a town house, etc. Now you can make these features dynamic by viewing them as processes (*wave*): How was the building constructed? By what legal action did it become a condominium? By what means do the individual owners interact to maintain the property?

The six perspectives get translated into a formidable chart, but they are really not arcane or difficult and have been adapted in several composition textbooks, most notably *The Four Worlds of Writing*, by Lauer et al. Axelrod and Cooper base a series of questions on Young, Becker, and Pike's heuristic. For example,

> *How much can your subject change and remain the same?* [variation]
> How has your subject changed from what it once was?
> How is it changing now—from moment to moment, day to day,
> year to year?
> How much can it change and still remain the same?
> What are some different forms your subject takes?
> What does it become when it is no longer itself? (393)

If the composing process is mysterious and somehow, but inexplicably, creative, then teaching people to write becomes impossible, for how can one teach an impenetrable mystery? With the classical rhetoricians, Young, Becker, and Pike are claiming that writing teachers can help students to be more inventive, to develop a wider variety of ideas, to grapple with problems rather than staring at them catatonically.

The New Stylistics

Given impetus first by structural and then by generative grammar in the 1950s, what we call the New Stylistics is an extension (or perhaps a reflowering) of Current-Traditional Rhetoric, in which style and form constituted virtually the all of composition. (Recall the emphasis in *The Foundations of Rhetoric*: "Differ as good writers may in other respects, they are all distinguished by the judicious choice and the skillful placing of words" [iii].)

In 1957, Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* revolutionized grammatical theory by positing that "[S]yntactic investigation of a given language has as its goal the construction of a grammar that can be viewed as a device of some sort for producing the sentences of the language under analysis" (11). In other words, a grammar was to be not merely descriptive, but, rather, *generative*. In 1966, *The Effect of a Study of Transformational Grammar on the Writing of Ninth and Tenth Graders*, by Donald Bateman and Frank R. Zidonis, reported on the attempt to apply the theories of "generative grammar" to composition pedagogy.

One insight of the "new" grammar was that sentences can be either "kernels" or agglomerations of kernels. For example, the following are kernels:

> The woman ate the meal.
> The man prepared the meal.

They can be combined:

> The woman ate the meal that the man prepared.

Bateman and Zidonis posited that studying this new kind of grammar would enable students to improve their stylistic virtuosity ("When students can clearly distinguish between kernel and non-kernel sentences, the reconstruction of complex sentences becomes a simple matter" [x]) but were cautious in evaluating their results, concluding nonetheless that "the study of a systematic grammar which is a theoretical model of the process of sentence production is the logical way to modify the process itself" (37).

In a follow-up study, *Transformational Sentence Combining* (1969), John Mellon hypothesized that practice in sentence combining would enhance the syntactic maturity of seventh-grade students, who would learn only enough grammar to understand the instructions or cues for the operation. Here are sample problems:

> *Fact Clause:*
> A. SOMETHING seemed to suggest SOMETHING.
> Bill finished his lessons in less than an hour. (T: fact)
> He had received special help from another student. (T: fact)
> B. The fact that Bill finished his lessons in less than an hour seemed to suggest that he had received special help from another student.

WH-Infinitive Phrase:

A. The instruction manual did not say SOMETHING.
Someone overhauls the engine sometime. (T: wh+inf)

B. The instruction manual did not say when to overhaul the engine.

Infinitive Phrase:

A. SOMETHING would be almost unbearable.
The rocket fails in its final stage. (T: infin)

B. For the rocket to fail in its final stage would be almost unbearable. (95)

Mellon concluded that practice in sentence combining did indeed accelerate growth in the syntax of his subjects, but, obviously, students needed a good deal of grammatical instruction before they could do the combining.

With *Sentence Combining: Improving Student Writing without Formal Grammar* (1973), Frank O'Hare cut sentence combining entirely free of grammar and made it an influential method of instruction, in grade and high school and in colleges and universities. Here, from page 57 of *Sentencecraft*, O'Hare's textbook, are examples of how he presents sentence combining:

1. We tried to explain SOMETHING.
Our English guest could not understand SOMETHING.
(THAT)
SOMETHING had caused so much confusion for some reason.
(WHY)
He drove on the left-hand side of the road. **('S + ING)**
[We tried to explain that our English guest could not understand why his driving on the left-hand side of the road had caused so much confusion.]

2. SOMETHING made Anatole wish SOMETHING.
There was every likelihood of SOMETHING. **(THE FACT THAT)**
He had to spend the day with his cousin Elmore. **('S + ING)**
He had stayed home. **(THAT)**
[The fact that there was every likelihood of his having to spend the day with his cousin Elmore made Anatole wish that he had stayed home.]

As we have noted, Francis Christensen first published his essay "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence" in that milestone issue of *College Composition and Communication,* October 1963. In the essay, he explained that eight "free modifiers" go to make up what he calls the "cumulative sentence": subordinate clause (SC), relative clause (RC), noun cluster (NC), verb cluster (VC), adjective cluster (AC), adjective series (A+A), absolute (Abs), and prepositional phrase (PP). Examples provide sufficient explanation of the free modifiers and cumulative sentences that they create:

1 He dipped his hands in the bichloride solution and shook them,
  2 a quick shake, (NC)
    3 fingers down, (Abs)
      4 like the fingers of a pianist above the keys. (PP) —Sinclair Lewis (*Notes*, 9)

  2 Calico-coated, (AC)
  2 small-bodied, (AC)
    3 with delicate legs and pink faces in which their mismatched eyes rolled wild and subdued, (PP)
1 they huddled,
  2 gaudy motionless and alert, (A+A)
  2 wild as deer, (AC)
  2 deadly as rattlesnakes, (AC)
  2 quiet as doves. (AC) —William Faulkner (*Notes*, 9)

Christensen's free modifiers have had less impact on teaching than has sentence combining, which was wildly popular for a decade or so, from about 1970 to 1980, and which has now sifted down into the sections on style in the textbooks.

The most substantial and probably the most widely adopted stylistics textbook is Joseph M. Williams's *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace,* now in its third edition (1989). Though the book results from the author's own work as a linguist, the theory is only the basis for a textbook usable by anyone who elects to teach lessons in style. The ten chapters are (1) "Toward Clarity," (2) "The Grammar of Clarity," (3) "The Grammar of Cohesion," (4) "The Grammar of Emphasis," (5) "The Grammar of Concision," (6) "Controlling Sprawl," (7) "Managing Long Sentences," (8) "A Touch of Class," (9) "Style and Punctuation," and (10) "Style and Usage."

As an example of the tone and contents of *Style: Ten Lessons in Clarity and Grace,* here is how Williams sums up the second chapter, "The Grammar of Clarity":

1. Whenever you can, express actions and conditions in specific verbs, adverbs, or adjectives:
   The *intention* of the committee is the *improvement* of morale.
   The committee *intends* to *improve* morale.
2. When it is appropriate, make the subjects of your verbs the agents of those actions:
   A decision on the part of *the Dean* in regard to the funding by *the Department* of the program must be made for there to be adequate *staff* preparation.
   If *the staff* is to prepare adequately, *the Dean* must decide whether *the Department* will fund the program.

3. Do not revise passives into actives if the agent of the action is unknown or unimportant.
   The President *was reelected* with 54% of the vote.
4. Do not rewrite into verbs those nominalizations that sum up in a subject what went before or that refer to a well-established concept:
   Analyses of this kind invariably produce misleading results.
   Dose response variables include type of *medication* and its absorption rates.

Whether or not *direct* teaching of stylistic principles is more effective than *indirect* methods (in which students acquire stylistic competence through reading and writing) is a question that teachers must answer in the context of what is known about systematic, conscious language learning and unsystematic, unconscious acquisition.[10]

Basic Writing

In 1970, the City University of New York adopted an open-admissions policy, guaranteeing every resident who had graduated from high school placement in one the institution's branches. The result was massive increases in numbers and dramatic changes in the kinds of students. From 174,000 students in 1969, enrollment swelled to 266,000 in 1975 (Shaughnessy, 1), and the faculty began to encounter students who needed massive help if they were to meet traditional academic expectations.

From this context came Mina Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations,* a study of what she called "basic writing." For an idea of what Shaughnessy and her colleagues were facing, ponder the following example of what she calls the disintegration of a basic writer:

> *Start 1*
> Seeing and hearing is something beautiful and strange to infant.
> *Start 2*
> To a infant seeing and hearing is something beautiful and stronge to infl
> *Start 3*
> I agree that seeing and hearing is something beautiful and stronge to a infants. A infants heres a strange sound such as work mother, he than acc
> *Start 4*
> I agree that child is more sensitive to beauty, because its all so new to him and he apprec

> *Start 5*
> The main point is that a child is more sensitive to beauty than there parents, because its the child a
> intfant can only express it feeling with reactions.
>
> *Start 6*
> I agree a child is more sensitive to seeing and hearing than his parent, because its also new to him and more appreciate. His
>
> *Start 7*
> I agree that seeing and hearing have a different quality for infants than grownup, because when infants comes aware of a sound and can associate it with the object, he is indefeying and the parents acknowledge to this
>
> *Start 8*
> I agree and disagree that seeing and hearing have a different quality for infants than for grownups, because to see and hear for infants its all so new and mor appreciate, but I also feel that a child parent appreciate the sharing
>
> *Start 9*
> I disagree I feel that it has the same quality to
>
> *Start 10*
> I disagree I fell that seeig and hearing has the same quality to both infants and parents. Hearing and seeing is such a great quality to infants and parents, and they both appreciate, just because there aren't that many panters or musicians around doesn't mean that infants are more sensitive to beautiful that there parents. (7–8)

The mechanical and syntactic errors that the student made—errors that are among those listed on the correction chart on page 32—are not as interesting as the problem most writers would have with the topic that the false starts imply: a comparison of infants' and adults' perception and appreciation of beauty. Certainly our most gifted students, without a good deal of preparation (including research), would have difficulty writing a coherent essay on this subject, as would the author of the present book.

Without detracting from Shaughnessy's courage in identifying herself as a teacher and scholar in basic writing, and without underestimating the importance of her book in establishing composition as a serious scholarly field, it must be said that her work has all the flaws of Current-Traditionalism. A glance at the table of contents (figure 6) of *Errors and Expectations* indicates Shaughnessy's concentration on style ("grammar," syntax), with invention (*ethos, pathos,* and *logos*) and form handled in a penultimate chapter ("Beyond the Sentence") almost as an afterthought.

As early as 1979, critiques of *Errors and Expectations* began to appear. For instance, John Rouse clearly laid out the problem of grammar, not only in Shaughnessy's work, but in English department humanities. Although the teaching of grammar as a method of teaching writing "has no support whatever in research evidence . . . what [Shaughnessy's] argument lacks in substance it gains in political appeal. Consider those teachers 'trained to analyze the belletristic achievements of the centuries marooned in basic writing classrooms.' They can now turn to the mysteries of grammar, they can still be the expositors of an esoteric knowledge" (3–4).

A Note on ESL (English as a Second Language)

Statistics are hardly necessary to convince one that America's public schools, colleges, and universities must now provide education for a dazzling array of students whose first language is not English. According to the 1993 *World Almanac*, in 1991 1,827,200 immigrants entered the United States from Europe (124,000), Asia (324,000), the Americas (1,297,600), Africa (33,500), Oceania (7,100), and other regions. English as a second language is necessarily a responsibility, but is it a part of composition/rhetoric? That is, should students be *taught* English before they enter into the mysteries of *ethos*, *logos*, and *pathos?*

Another way of putting the question is this: should ESL instruction be bottom-up or top-down? Bottom-up instruction would begin at the phonetic-phonemic level, students being drilled in the pronunciation of English. The next step up would be grammar drill in connection, probably, with simple readings and vocabulary lists. From this point on, instruction spirals, the grammar drills becoming more complex and detailed and the readings graded upward in difficulty— from the comic pages of the newspaper to a Hemingway story to *Walden*. We might call this the *technic* of ESL. Contrasted with this technic is the *rhetoric* of ESL, a top-down approach that begins with the learner's *semantic intention*, the will to communicate, and relies on subconscious processes of learning as the means whereby the speaker/writer acquires the second language.

What I call the *technic* of ESL resulted to a large extent from twentieth-century linguistic theories: from structuralism through Chomskianism. In *Appropriating Literacy*, Judith Rodby tells this important story (1–27), and she concludes thus:

> [L]inguistic theory has provided ESL specialists with tacit perspectives on language and its relationship to both second-language acquisition and literacy. These perspectives include claims that: because language is thought, writing is a thinking process;

1. Introduction
2. Handwriting and Punctuation
3. Syntax
4. Common Errors
5. Spelling
6. Vocabulary
7. Beyond the Sentence
8. Expectations

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Fig. 6. Table of contents from Mina Shaughnessy's *Errors and Expectations.*

> because language acquisition unfolds in the individual, writing is also an individual process; because language is speech, writing is a secondary code, a representation of speech. Generally, when "society" and "social aspects" of language are factored into these frameworks, the equation states that prior to the moment of utterance, society determined language structures, which in turn determined thought. The relationship between language and society is conceived to be unidirectional and static rather than dynamic and dialectical. Because ESL specialists have subscribed to these notions of language, in general, they have precluded the understanding that ESL literacy is a rhetorical act, a social act in which writers and readers interact with other writers and readers, affecting them through language. (25)

Probably the most influential theorist currently working in ESL is Stephen Krashen, whose "monitor theory" of language learning debunks the lore that students must consciously learn grammar rules in order to master a second language. Here, in brief, is the theory.

Language learning takes place largely through unconscious *acquisition* and can, to a limited extent, come about through conscious *drill.*[11] For example, a Cambodian refugee begins to *acquire* English through trying to communicate; through the need to survive—to obtain lodging and food, to navigate in the city, to greet and thank those around her. She gains vocabulary and grammar (in the sense that she can begin to produce English sentences). In a relatively short time, she has a functional mastery of English; however, desiring to extend and refine her knowledge, she enrolls in the ESL program in the local community college. Now she begins to get instruction in composition as well as conversation, and probably she consciously learns some "grammar" through drill. With what she learns through drill, she can *monitor* her output, provided she has time, which means that when she is in a conversation, she does not have the opportunity to plan in advance and then regularize her output; she must be willing to make "errors" or else she will be mute and will not acquire. In writing, she does have time to go back over the text and regularize it.

Now two points must be made. First, the amount of grammar that one can learn through drill is extremely limited; the overwhelming mass of language "knowledge" comes about through acquisition and is not accessible to the learner, who can use this knowledge but cannot explain it. Second, we can apply this principle to composition. Students—both native-born and ESL—often have problems with the "mechanics" of written English: punctuation, pronoun reference, verb agreement, and so on. These apprentice writers should be encouraged to ignore the "surface" features of their texts—that is, should be discouraged from proofreading—until they feel that they have accomplished their semantic intentions, after which they can go back over their texts to regularize them.

In a later chapter, I quote Elinor Ochs, but what she has to say is worth hearing twice: "Meaning is embedded in cultural conceptions of context, and in this respect the process of acquiring language is embedded in the process of socialization of knowledge" (3). People of all ages learn language(s) by attempting to respond to *meaningful* input—by attempting to communicate meanings. All of the evidence indicates that memorization and drill are precisely the least effective methods of teaching a second language. Rhetoric, with its emphasis on semantic intention (the need or desire to communicate) and its attention to *ethos* and *pathos*, is the most productive and humane approach to teaching English (composition) to speakers of other languages.

Notes

1. From Crews, *The Random House Handbook*.

2. The essay is, of course, the neutral territory between "imaginative" literature, literary nonfiction (e.g., biography and history), and the utilitarian modes (reports, business letters, and so on).

3. My term "Romantic Rhetoric" corresponds with Berlin's "Subjective Rhetoric," which during the sixties and seventies "was found in a group of diverse approaches commonly called expressionistic. These share a common

epistemology: the conviction that reality is a personal and private construct" (*Rhetoric and Reality*, 145).

4. See *Nothing Begins with N: New Investigations of Freewriting*. Ed. Pat Belanoff, Peter Elbow, and Sheryl L. Fontaine. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991.

5. At times it appears that Elbow is Derridean, but that, I think, is an illusion. When Derrida speaks of making meaning, he is not referring to some preexisting, Platonic stuff in the mind or soul of the meaning-maker, whereas Elbow, like Emerson, is clearly given to the belief in presence, that is, the pre-existence of meaning, to which language can give expression.

6. The first meeting of what was to become the Conference on College Composition and Communication was held in Chicago in 1949 and was called by NCTE at the request of John Gerber of the University of Iowa. Amazingly, 500 people attended.

7. Heuristics are procedures for questioning in order to solve problems. Unlike algorithms, heuristics are not rule governed. The most widely used heuristic is journalism's Who-Where-What-When-How? On pages 73–75, we discussed Kenneth Burke's Pentad, and below we will discuss the tagmemic heuristic developed by Young, Becker, and Pike.

8. A modified version of the Pentad.

9. A version of Young, Becker, and Pike's tagmemic heuristic.

10. The distinction between conscious learning and unconscious acquisition (discussed on pages 58–59) is very important to teachers of composition. See Krashen and Horning.

11. I have adjusted Krashen's terminology. By "learning," he means conscious learning, and by "acquisition" he means unconscious learning. Thus, I use "drill" where Krashen would use "learning."

Suggested Readings

Berlin, James J. *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing Instruction in American Colleges, 1900–1985*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987.

A now-standard history that approaches its subject on the basis of the epistemologies of practitioners.

Connors, Robert J. "Textbooks and the Evolution of the Discipline." *College Composition and Communication* 37 (1986): 178–94.

An apposite account of the influence of textbooks on the development of composition/rhetoric as a discipline.

Horning, Alice S. *Teaching Writing as a Second Language*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987.

Argues on the basis of analogy that ESL methods and theories apply to basic writers since they are learning what amounts to a "foreign language."

Rodby, Judith. *Appropriating Literacy: Writing and Reading in English as a Second Language.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1992.
A critique of behaviorally based models of ESL instruction, arguing that learning a second language comes about through social interaction.

4 Two Modern Masters

The list of those "outsiders" in the twentieth century who have significantly influenced the "insiders" of composition/rhetoric includes Noam Chomsky, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Roman Jakobsen, Chaim Perelman, Stephen Toulmin . . . and the list could go on and on. However, two names are preeminently important: I. A. Richards and Kenneth Burke. Richards is a direct descendant of Coleridge and, more than anyone else, was instrumental in reestablishing rhetoric as a subject for consideration in the academy; the rhetoric of I. A. Richards is an extension of nineteenth-century views. Kenneth Burke was influential in establishing a new kind of rhetoric based on mutual agreement and accommodation rather than persuasion (in the raw sense of that term). He represents postmodernist thought and practice and was a "deconstructionist" long before that term had currency. Richards is in the tradition that runs from Plato through Elbow; Kenneth Burke's nominalism is in the empirical tradition of Aristotle and the skeptical tradition of Isocrates.

I. A. Richards[1]

Richards is, clearly, a major presence and influence in the history of literary criticism and theory, but for at least three reasons he is equally important to composition/rhetoric. First, literary theory has always greatly influenced both the theories and the practices of compositionists (Atkins and Johnson; Aycock; Comprone; Corder; Scholes; Winterowd, "Post-Structuralism" and "Purification"). Second, Richards was a founder of the New Rhetoric. Third, through his works we gain understanding of an influential group of contemporary compositionists, the "Romantics."[2] (Of course, we would not claim that Richards *directly* influenced *each* of the Romantics in composition, any more than we would argue, for instance, that B. F. Skinner *directly* influenced those educators—particularly reading "specialists"—who are still guided by the assumptions of stimulus-response learning theory.)

I. A. Richards was so deeply influenced by Coleridge that to study Richards is to see Coleridge through the lens and filter of a scholar-teacher who believed profoundly in the utopian potential of science, thus paradoxically embodying the Romantic belief that all knowledge is personal and subjective as well as the modernist faith in objective, empirical science.[3]

Richards as Practical Critic. Since *Practical Criticism* is Richards's best-known and most influential work, it is an excellent starting place for a discussion of its author,[4] who was attempting to establish empirical grounds for literary judgment using evidence rigorously, if not scientifically, but who, throughout his career, clung tenaciously to the Romantic faith in the inner vision. Richards might well have been speaking when Emerson said, "To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you is true for all men—that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense" ("Self-Reliance," 145).

A classic in literary theory, *Practical Criticism,* we remind ourselves, explained ten problems in reading poetry:

1. *Making out the plain sense.* The subjects failed "to make out [the poem's] prose sense, its plain, overt meaning, taken apart from any further poetic significance" (12).
2. *Difficulties of sensuous apprehension.* The subjects often failed to apprehend the movement and rhythm of the poems (12–13).
3. *Difficulties with imagery.* Some readers fail to grasp the imagery, and others judge the poem solely on the basis of imagery's vividness (13).
4. *Mnemonic irrelevancies,* "misleading effects of the reader's being reminded of some personal scene or adventure, erratic associations, the interference of emotional reverberations from a past which may have nothing to do with the poem" (13).
5. *Stock responses,* "views and emotions already fully prepared in the reader's mind" (14).
6. *Sentimentality* (14).
7. *Inhibition,* the opposite of sentimentality (14).
8. *Doctrinal adhesions,* the bearing of the reader's beliefs and convictions upon his or her reading of the poetry (14).
9. *Technical presuppositions.* "When something has been once well done in a certain fashion we tend to expect similar things to be done in the future in the same fashion, and are disappointed or do not recognize them if they are done differently" (15).

10. *General critical preconceptions,* "prior demands made upon poetry as a result of theories—conscious or unconscious—about its nature and value" (15).

A chic response is, of course, very easy: "But we *all* know that Richards's list of rubs is in part truisms, to some extent a list of necessary components for understanding *any* text, and in many particulars a direct contradiction of what we know about the psychology of reading. For example, without technical presuppositions, how could one read in any genre? And only a robot could be without doctrine." However, freed of our own current doctrinal adhesions and critical preconceptions, *Practical Criticism* emerges as a remarkably enlightened and enlightening book. For several decades it was the first critical work that a student of literature encountered, and few works surpass it in usefulness. Richards has told us that "[A] book is a machine to think with" (*Principles,* 1); *Practical Criticism* is a machine to teach poetry with. The ten-item rubric, whatever its derivation, is seminal.

Richards as Romantic. From this point on, the argument becomes more complex *and* important for composition/rhetoric. A schematic of what is to follow looks like this: Through Coleridge, Richards derived a theory of imagination that placed supreme value on uses of language that lead to contemplation rather than action—in other words, Richards valued poetry over rhetoric (as he defined these terms) and was thus one—but only one among many—of the forces leading to the degradation of both composition and "the literature of fact." The doctrines of I. A. Richards help one understand why historically composition has been on the fringes (or in the ghetto) of the humanities and why the essay, biography, autobiography, and history are peripheral in the study of "literature."

Though *Coleridge on the Imagination* (1934) comes after *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1925), we will begin with the former because Richards's critical principles are so obviously derived from Coleridge.[5]

Setting up the conditions for his study, Richards makes a number of disclaimers. First, his intention is not to explain Coleridge but to use Coleridge's work to construct his own "instrument." Second, Coleridge was a bad philosopher but "naturally a psychologist" (2), and his critical theories came from his psychology, not his philosophy. (For his psychology, Coleridge needed only to look within.) Third, Richards is writing as a materialist trying to interpret an idealist, for by about 1800 Coleridge had converted from Hartley's materialist associationism to Kant's transcendental idealism (17). Richards's *purpose* is to deconstruct metaphysics through Coleridge's poetics (20); his *method* "is to use Coleridge's metaphysical machinery *as* machinery, disregarding the undeniable fact that Coleridge himself so often took it to be much more" (21).

The first bit of Coleridgean "machinery" that Richards deals with is the distinction between fancy and imagination, which John Livingston Lowes, we are told, misapprehends, holding that "the materials operated with are the same, and that only the degree of the 'operant power' varies" (32). Set the dial on "medium," and you can fry a fancy egg; set it on "broil," and you can cook an imaginative T-bone. But Lowes's use of the machinery would make the construction of Richards's instrument impossible, since, as we shall see, primary imagination, secondary imagination, and fancy, as distinct *meaning-making* faculties, are essential components.

Coleridge's epistemology, as explained by Richards, "treats knowing as a kind of making, *i.e.* the bringing into being of what is known. By itself, it makes no discoveries except in the sense of discovering what it has made" (49). Later, Richards restates the idea thus: "The Imagination projects the life of the mind not upon Nature in Sense I, the field of influences from without to which we are subject, but upon a Nature that is already a projection of our sensibility" (164). It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to determine just how many meaning-making faculties Richards attributes to mind,[6] but it is patently obvious that *his* epistemology views mind as the great organizer or structurer. As he puts it in *Principles of Literary Criticism,* "We only know that a growing order is the principle of the mind, that its function is to co-ordinate, and we can detect that in some of its forms the precedence is different from that in others" (50). It is extremely important to note that in this epistemology, Richards has done away with will or, in rhetorical terms, purpose. The mind works either in an aleatory or an algorithmic fashion and in cognition is amazed at what it has assembled. We find echoes—reverberations!—of this doctrine in the work of the Romantic compositionists.

For Richards, knowing comes about in roughly the following way: The subject perceives (sees, hears, feels, smells) the object. (In reading a poem, we begin with "The visual sensations of the printed words" [*Principles,* 117]). Richards does not explain how mind bridges the gap between the information supplied by print and meaning derived therefrom.) The mind organizes the perception, and the object now becomes a projection of our sensibility and in this sense is knowable.

Because understanding Richards's interpretation of Coleridge's theory of imagination is essential for understanding contemporary composition/rhetoric, I quote at length:

> The Primary Imagination is normal perception that produces the usual world of the senses,
>
> That inanimate cold world allowed
> To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd
>
> the world of motor-buses, beef-steaks, and acquaintances, the framework of things and events within which we maintain our everyday existence, the world of the routine satisfaction of our minimum exigencies. The Secondary Imagination, reforming this world, gives us not only poetry—in the limited sense in which literary critics concern themselves with it—but every aspect of the routine world in which it is invested with other values than these necessary for our bare continuance as living beings: all objects for which we feel love, awe, admiration.... All the supernumerary perceptions which support civilized life are the product of the Secondary Imagination; and, though the processes by which they are created are best studied in words—in the highest examples in poetry—the rest of the fabric of the world of values is of the same origin. Thus, that there should be a connection between poetry and the ordering of life should not surprise....
>
> Against both Primary and Secondary Imagination is set Fancy—which collects and re-arranges, without re-making them, units of meaning already constituted by Imagination. In Imagination the mind is growing; in Fancy it is merely reassembling products of its past creation.... (58–59)

Which boils down to something like this. The primary imagination is, at best, Matthew Brady or Margaret Bourke White: a photographer. The secondary imagination is Mary Cassatt or Pablo Picasso: a creative artist. (We can round Coleridge's faculties of creativity off by saying that fancy is Jean Arp: a madcap Dadaist.)

In *Principles*, Richards argues that accounts of values and of communication must form the basis for a theory of criticism, and he goes on to discuss the poet as a communicator. In fact, the artist is not concerned with communication but concentrates on "getting the work, the poem or play or statue or painting or whatever it is, 'right', apparently regardless of its communicative efficacy" (26). Which is not to say that the communicative efficacy of the work doesn't matter, for, of course, the work must get through to an audience. The point is simply that the artist doesn't concern him- or herself with the "getting through" in the process of fashioning the work. However, only "a simple view of psychology" (27) would discount the possibility that the artist's attempt to exclude "his private, eccentric, momentary idiosyncrasies" (27–28) results from an unconscious desire to communicate.

And so, real art, in its inception, is not intended to communicate, at least not in any of the crass senses that common opinion attributes to rhetoric. These pronouncements can lead and have led to the conclusion that rhetoric is debased. Rhetoric is consciously intended to communicate (or persuade) and thus is less valuable and subtle than poetry. Conversely, any writer who consciously intends to communicate is something less than a poet. In *Foundations*, Richards and his co-authors had argued that the most perfect work brings about equilibrium.

> In equilibrium, there is no tendency to action, and any concert-goer must have realized the impropriety of the view that action is the proper outcome of aesthetic appreciation. When impulses are "harmonized" on the other hand they work together, and such disciplined coordination in action is much to be desired in other places. When works of art produce such action, or conditions which lead to action, they have either not completely fulfilled their function or would in the view of equilibrium here being considered be called not "beautiful" but "stimulative." (76–77)

Perfect balance negating the impulse for action on the part of the reader, hearer, or viewer—that is the value of art. Organization, ordering, systematizing—this is the basic function of the mind. "We only know that a growing order is the principle of the mind, that its function is to co-ordinate, and we can detect that in some of its forms the precedence is different from that in others" (50).

Richards as Language Theorist. *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923), co-authored with C. K. Ogden, is perhaps the most widely known but in many ways the least interesting of Richards's statements regarding language. Ogden and Richards define *symbols* as *signs* "which men use to communicate with one another and as instruments of thought" (23): e.g., "words, arrangements of words, images, gestures, and such representations as drawings or mimetic sounds" (23). Signs (and, hence, symbols) gain their meaning through interpretation: "Our Interpretation of any sign is our psychological reaction to it, as determined by our past experience in similar situations, and by our present experience" (244).

In *Mencius on the Mind* (1930), we find Richards's theory of language most clearly explained. The "Foreword" tells us that the book came about as the result of conversations that Richards had over a three-month period with a study group in Peking. Two scholars from Yenching University translated the passages from Mencius that Richards analyzes and that are included as an appendix in the book. Richards goes on to protest his own incompetence in the subject that he has undertaken, justifying his work on the basis of the problems that he will raise, which "are not so likely to occur to a trained and hardened scholar in Chinese" (xi).

Richards deals with the ambiguity of language and, more interestingly, with the cultural relativity of modes of thought such as logic. Richards says,

> In attempting to choose one reading rather than another a very important consideration is soon forced upon us. As we shall see, Chinese thinking often gives no attention to distinctions which for Western minds are so traditional and so firmly established in thought and language, that we neither question them nor even become aware of them *as distinctions*. We receive and use them as though they belonged unconditionally to the constitution of things (or of thought). We forget that these distinctions have been made and maintained as part of one tradition of thinking; and that another tradition of thinking might neither find use for them nor (being committed to other courses) be able to admit them. (3–4)

Richards was caught in the tangle of Romantic doctrine regarding thought and language. For example, he discusses thoughts whose structure and content are inexpressible in "available formulations" (8), and he realizes that no one can ever again think the thoughts of Mencius because contemporary mentality distorts them (9–10). Furthermore, if we are not careful about our use of language, we will deceive *ourselves* about our own thoughts.

> If we do not use language perfectly (and no one does), we may say something which does not misinterpret our thought to ourselves but does misrepresent it to other people. We shall not then have *truly* reported our thought. But, as often happens, we may also be misrepresenting it to ourselves (largely through the equivocations of language) and a second kind of falseness comes in. (112)

As translator-interpreter-hermeneuticist, Richards is, in fact, trapped in Borges's Library of Babel, from which there is no exit.

How to Read a Page is worth mentioning because it was tremendously successful and because in it we see I. A. Richards, the almost-deconstructionist, who senses that absolute determinacy of meaning is a mirage:

> A map on which hills and valleys could reasonably change places according to the consulting eye would be condemned as worthless by all. But with the highest poetry and philosophy and moral teaching, something like this happens and rightly. And the great pages lose nothing of their perpetual value because it happens. Indeed, their value is perpetual because through them, as through nothing else, we gain such opportunities of surveying ourselves and our worlds. (11–12)

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However, one reading is *not* just as good as another. "All the value comes from the depth and honesty, the sincerity and stress of the reflection through which we choose which meanings among its [the page's] possibilities we will take seriously into our considerations" (12–13).

The problems that Richards "teases out" are the ambiguity in language and cultural differences in modes of thought. The problem that emerges, apparently without Richards's awareness, is the relationship between thought and language (or the Western metaphysics of presence)—one might call it "the Romantic paradox": the belief, on the one hand, that there is truth and, on the other hand, that language makes that truth.

I will not attempt to outline, let alone solve, the monumental problems that the deconstructionist project raises for composition, nor will I commit myself on my own position in regard to that project, but I will propose an excellent means for avoiding deconstruction's plagues of words, its pitfalls of reasoning, and the cachet of its practitioners: view writing as a way of *doing* something, not as a way of making or finding something. This crucial shift allows us to focus on intention instead of meaning; on symbolic action instead of truth or sincerity. If we are doing something with writing, we are satisfied to achieve agreement or consensus, and we can let Jacques Derrida, the metaphysicians, and the Romantics carry on the debate about presence.

Richards in Summary (from the Standpoint of Composition/Rhetoric). Richards's work in literary theory and criticism helped establish the hegemony of New Criticism in the United States, and New Criticism was translated *mutatis mutandis* into a tacit theory of composition that resulted in the text-centered instruction against which the shibboleth "Process, not product!" was the counterreaction.

The work of Richards the Romantic had at least three consequences. First, it devalued rhetoric as the art of effective communication and placed supreme value on "poetry," the main purpose of which was, according to Richards, to express the self, not to communicate. (Communication would come about as a by-product of expression.) Second, Richards's theory devalued what is now called "the literature of fact" (essay, nonfiction novel, biography, autobiography, nature writing, and so on) since, by implication, it would have two disqualifying aspects: it would, or might well, lead to action, and it is obviously the product of Coleridge's primary ("photographic," "uncreative") imagination. Third, Richards helped create the basis for what we call Romantic composition.

Kenneth Burke

I. A. Richards is historically much more important than Kenneth Burke. In the decades from 1930 to 1960, Richards was not only in the mainstream of theories of language and literature; he helped set their course. On the other hand, Burke was outside the establishment. As Frank Lentricchia puts it, "Until recent years the canons of truth and sanity that govern the writing of critical theory in the United States have implicitly decreed that much of what Burke does is a deviation from good sense, which I translate: disturbing, different, perhaps dangerous" (119). In the last few years, however, this disturbing, different, perhaps dangerous thinker has come to be regarded not only as important, but as essential to literary and rhetorical theory. Furthermore, Burke's theories of epistemology and language and his analytical methods have become increasingly important in the social sciences. For example, in *Tropics of Discourse,* Hayden White uses Burke's concept of the master tropes (*Grammar,* 503–17) as a means of historical explanation.

Since Burke's thought has developed continually from his earliest work, a relatively brief summary is difficult, but such a condensation surely must deal with his view of language as symbolic action; his revolutionary theory of rhetoric; his philosophy of motives (dramatism); his theory of literature; and the uses to which his work can be put.

Language as Symbolic Action. One of the significant facts of Burke's career is that he began his work in the hostile world of behaviorism and positivism, where human purposes were reducible to stimuli and actions to responses, and where only tautological and empirically verifiable statements counted. In 1935, he explained that

> Insofar as schemes of motivation change, one may expect a change in the very motives which people assign to their actions. A motive is not some fixed thing, like a table, which one can go and look at. It is a term of interpretation, and being such it will naturally take its place within the framework of our *Weltanschauung* as a whole. (*Permanence,* 25)

But there can be motives only if humans are capable of *actions* as opposed to motions, for actions result from motives or purposes, whereas motions result from natural laws. One of Burke's characteristic (and endearing) techniques is to explain abstract principles with concrete examples, or, in his own terminology, *representative anecdotes:*

> For instance, the behaviorist uses his experiments with the conditioned reflex as the anecdote about which to form his vocabulary for the discussion of human motives; but this anecdote, though

> notably *informative*, is not *representative*, since one cannot find a representative case of human motivation in animals, if only because animals lack that property of linguistic rationalization which is so typical of human motives. A representative case of human motivation must have a strongly linguistic bias, whereas animal experimentation necessarily neglects this. (*Grammar*, 59)

This fundamental move enabled him to deal with language as symbolic action, entailing the question "What does the text *do?*" rather than "What *is* the text?" Thus, the ontological question "What is literature?" counts less than the pragmatic question "What does the text do?" and the ethical question "What is the value or consequence of what the text does?"

His "Definition of Man" (*Language as Symbolic Action*, 2–24) is the most apposite statement of his "philosophy."

Man is the symbol-using animal. Reality is actually a "clutter of symbols." And thus we can confidently class Burke as a nominalist—and that's very important, for it sets him at the antipodes from the Idealists. In any case, we can think of the *terministic screen* here. We see reality through the screen of the terms that we choose. If we are behaviorists, everything is stimulus-response, and if we are Dramatists (in the sense of the Pentad, which is discussed below), everything is a drama. So Burke realizes that his screen isn't the only one available, but he argues for its superiority because it does take account of symbol-using and of action and motive. Burke violates all of the strictures of positivism with this: the behaviorist doctrine that you can't see mind, only actions; the New Critical doctrine of the intentional fallacy. And the human use of symbols brings up the problem of man and animal, for some of our motives are purely physical or at least largely physical. (Burke would write pages and pages on this problem. Is my sex drive or hunger drive the same as that of Rin Tin Tin? Aren't my most basic drives influenced by the symbols I use?) Anyway, Burke asks, "Which motives derive from man's animality, which from his symbolicity, and which from the combination of the two?"

Inventor of the negative. "There are no negatives in nature." Dramatistically speaking, the hortatory negative—Thou shalt not!—is prior to the propositional negative. Now once we have the hortatory negative, we also have guilt, and when we have guilt, we have the need for expiation, and when we have the need for expiation, we also need a scapegoat, and. . . .

Separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making. In a sense, this was Plato's lament about literacy in the *Phaedrus*, and it is the ongoing argument of Walter Ong:

> Oral utterance . . . encourages a sense of continuity with life, sense of participation, because it is itself participatory. Writing and print, despite their intrinsic value, have obscured the nature of the word and of thought itself, for they have sequestered the essentially participatory word—fruitfully enough, beyond a doubt—from its natural habitat, sound, and assimilated it to a mark on a surface, where a real word cannot exist at all. (21)

The result is that literate people in technological societies view the written word as "real" and the spoken word as inconsequential. Literacy, an instrument made by "man," separates "him" from his natural condition with a vengeance. Or think of Henry James's works, from *The American* through *The Golden Bowl*: the theme is separation from the natural condition through culture, the ultimate human instrument. Christopher Newman, Isabel Archer, Chad—all of James's central characters suffer the tragedy of knowledge, of leaving the Garden of Eden (usually America) for a more sophisticated, knowing society (usually Europe).

Goaded by the spirit of hierarchy. "Those 'Up' are guilty of not being 'Down,' those 'Down' are certainly guilty of not being 'Up'" (15).

And rotten with perfection. But remember that perfection can also be ironic, as when we call someone a "perfect" fool, and in "The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle," Burke points out that Hitler made the Jews into the perfect villains.

From Persuasion to identification. In its most dramatic outline, here is the Burkean revolution in rhetoric. Whereas Aristotle stressed *persuasion*, Burke took *identification* as the basis of rhetoric. Aristotle said, "So let Rhetoric be defined as the faculty [power] of discovering in the particular case what are the available means of persuasion" (7). The image is that of a rhetor working his or her will upon the reader or hearer. Kenneth Burke said, "You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, *identifying* your ways with his. . . . True, the rhetorician may have to change an audience's opinions in one respect; but he can succeed only insofar as he yields to that audience's opinions in other respects" (*Rhetoric*, 55–56). The image is that of a dialogue, the participants cooperating to achieve understanding and knowledge.

This is, of course, a perilous view of rhetoric, for by its terms, no one can "win," and, in a sense, everyone loses. Suppose for instance that I, as missionary of *the* true church, with absolute faith in my belief, come to convert you, that is, to bring the truth to you. Ideally, since I have the truth, you will attend to my message and (unless you are invincibly ignorant) convert. You may, of course, ask me to clarify points, but you will not put forth your own opinion. You are an empty vessel eager to be filled with the good words. Less than ideally, you will engage me in dialogue (i.e., dialectic), and it will not be genuine dialogue unless I am open to understanding. If I do indeed understand, it can fairly be said that you have converted me just as surely as I might convert you. Furthermore, it is obvious that from the rhetorical viewpoint, there is no absolute Truth, only those halcyon moments when you and I can say that we understand one another.

With this *dramatistic* view, the terms associated with rhetoric shift:

persuasion	*becomes*	understanding
convincing		agreeing
logic		dilaectic
argument (debate)		discussion
speaker		participant
hearer or reader		participant

Clearly, Burke is setting forth not merely a new "technical" rhetoric, but a view of how language brings about (or might bring about) unity rather than division, peace rather than war. Such a view of rhetoric has obvious and profound implications for teachers of writing (and we will discuss those implications hereafter). Interestingly enough, however, Burke is most widely known among composition teachers *not* for his revolution in rhetoric, but for his dramatistic Pentad.

Dramatism and the Pentad. Burke asks what we need to know in order to understand "what people are doing and why they are doing it" (*Grammar*, xv). And he answers his question thus:

> In a rounded statement about motives, you must have some word that names the *act* (names what took place in thought or deed), and another that names the *scene* (the background of the act, the situation in which it occurred); also, you must indicate what person or kind of person (*agent*) performed the act, what means or instruments he used (*agency*), and the *purpose*. (*Grammar*, xv)

In a story (whether fiction or fact), the *acts* are what the people (characters) do. A list of the actions in a story would be a chronicle: first this happened and then that and then the other. However, when we read stories, we want more than the mere chronology. We want to understand the characters who performed the acts and the reasons for those acts. What means or agencies did the characters use in performing the acts? And in what scene was the act performed?

Scene includes both "when" and "where," the time and the place of the action. Thus, the scene at the beginning of "Macbeth" is a blasted heath, where three witches perform their unholy rites; The "Star Trek" episodes are set at an indefinite time in the future, somewhere in space; the classic American Western on film or TV takes place toward the end of the nineteenth century and is set west of the hundredth meridian of longitude, in the Great Plains ("Gunsmoke"), the Rocky Mountains (*Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*), and the Sierras ("Bonanza").

Scene can also be metaphorical. For instance, we live during the Atomic Age in the Land of Opportunity, and are thankful that the founding fathers of our nation were products of the Age of Reason. Franklin Roosevelt initiated the era of the New Deal, and Harry Truman's years in the White House were the period of the Fair Deal.

What sort of person is the character or *agent?* Is Hamlet actually indecisive? Was General Grant a drunkard, or is his legendary consumption of alcohol a myth? Is Lady Macbeth completely evil, or is she a tormented soul? Was Mary Todd Lincoln a cold, domineering woman, or is her portrayal in popular history a distortion of the real woman? What are the agents' beliefs and values? Educational and cultural background? Family ties? Careers?

The *agency* is the means through or by which the act is performed. In a mystery story, the murder weapon is the agency; money is the financier's agency; Sherlock Holmes's agency is logic, which he employs to solve the most baffling crimes. In short, the agent uses an agency to perform an act. In stories, when Character A uses Character B without B's realization that he is being used, B is the agency.

In trying to understand narratives, we ask what the agents (i.e., characters) intend by their acts. What do they want to accomplish? What was their *purpose?*

However, we can view any text as an *act* performed by an *agent* (the author) at a given time and in a certain place (*scene*), with the help of some *agency* (or several agencies such as a computer on which the author composes the text and the college literary magazine that publishes it), and for some *purpose*. This double nature of the Pentad makes it extremely useful, for it allows us to ask the important questions about all kinds of texts. For example, when we analyze an argument in behalf of some position, we want to know as much as we can about the arguer (agent): his or her background, philosophy, politics, and so on; the scene in which the argument arose: the time and place, the political and social conditions of the scene, and much more; the agency or agencies whereby the argument is conveyed: for example, television, newspaper, book; and the purpose of the argument.

The Pentad gains its power from the *ratios* that it implies: act/agent, act/agency, act/scene, act/purpose; agent/act, agent/agency, agent/

scene, agent/purpose. . . . Any one of the five terms can be the pivot, to be investigated from the standpoint of the other four. As Burke says, "By examining [the terms] quizzically, we can range far; yet the terms are always there for us to reclaim, in their everyday simplicity, their almost miraculous easiness, thus enabling us constantly to begin afresh" (*Grammar*, xvi).

A central concept of dramatism is the difference between *action* and *motion*. In Burke's terms, an act contrasts with a *motion* in that motion is purely physical, governed by gravity, combustion, and so on. An act, then, is free, whereas motion is simply inevitable. Waving at a passerby is an act; digestion is a motion. However, if an act always takes place in a scene, how can it be free, the result of volition by an autonomous subject? In a dialogue constructed from diverse sources, we hear Frank Lentricchia pinning Burke in a corner, and we learn how Burke escapes:

> *Frank Lentricchia:* In order for an act to be itself, and not a disguised term for scene, Burke says that it must possess a wholly arbitrary (magical) dimension: the act that is truly an act presumes creativity in the literal sense. No act is truly an act, then, unless it can be shown to have a radically originating function. No matter how assiduously secular the philosophical systems that feature it, all ideas of act will easily be traced to some sort of theological conception: "God would thus be perfect action," and of course perfect agent, "in that there would be no motivating principle beyond his own nature . . . [*Grammar*, 68–69]." (Lentricchia, 138)
>
> *Kenneth Burke:* With language, a whole new realm of purpose arises, endless in scope, as contrasted with the rudimentary purposes we derive from our bodies, the needs of food, drink, shelter and sex in their physical simplicity.
>
> Language can even build purpose out of the ability to comment on the nature of purpose. However, the purposes that arise through the tangles made possible by language are not merely the old bodily appetites in a new form. They are appetites differing not just in degree but in kind. And the two kinds differ so greatly that, as tested by the wishes of the body, the purposes supplied by language (by doctrine) can amount even to a kind of built-in frustration. Simplest example: What hungry belly could be quieted by a poem in praise of food? Yet, as we have said, language will not let men be satisfied with sheer bodily purposes either, as other animals presumably are. . . . Given language, you can never be sure where quest ends and question begins. (*Religion*, 274–75)

Burke's Theory of Literature. A dangerous, but useful, oversimplification would explain Burke's importance to literary studies in this way: since the Romantic Movement, theory has attempted to create for literature a special place outside the quotidian, a rarefied space reserved for those who desire—and are capable of—something finer, purer, and more intense than the everyday; throughout his career, Burke has argued that literature is not only related to the quotidian, but should be an essential part thereof. In 1941, he even had the audacity to publish an essay titled "Literature as Equipment for Living" (*Philosophy*, 253–62).

One need not argue that in the literary establishment—in what might be called "English department humanities"—"imaginative" texts are more highly valued than "nonimaginative" ones. This being the case, teaching "creative writing" is more valuable than teaching "composition," and "nonimaginative" literature is represented sparsely, if at all, in the curriculum and canon. The 1990 MLA convention program is the one hundred and sixth formal statement of the marginalization of composition/rhetoric and "the literature of fact" within English department humanities. Of the 699 sessions listed, sixty-four are indexed under "Literary Criticism and Theory," but none of these seem directly to concern the "other" literature; eleven sessions are indexed under "Nonfictional Prose"; and six appear under "Rhetoric and Rhetorical Theory." None appear under "Composition"—theory, teaching, or other. Burke is important to teachers of literature and composition precisely because his works provide a way of rectifying the aberration that devalues "nonimaginative" literature and composition.

In *Counter-Statement* (1931), Burke initiates his argument about the nature of literature with this definition of form: "the creation of an appetite in the mind of the auditor, and the adequate satisfying of that appetite" (31), which makes the analysis of form a rhetorical problem, judging the effects of the work on its readers or hearers. As he said much later, "I began in the aesthete tradition, with the stress upon self-expression. Things started moving for me in earnest when, as attested in *Counter-Statement*, I made the shift from 'self-expression' to 'communication'" ("Rhetoric and Poetics," 305).

The most dramatic (and perhaps the most useful) distinction in *Counter-Statement* is that between the psychology of information and the psychology of form. Information—whether news of an international catastrophe or backyard gossip—is inherently interesting; we read some texts (e.g., the *World Almanac* or the daily newspaper) for the information that they provide, but, for instance, "in the case of Antony's speech [in *Julius Caesar*], the value lies in the fact that his words are shaping the future of the audience's desires, not the desires of the Roman populace, but the desires of the pit. This is the psychology of form as distinguished from the psychology of information" (33). In other words, "Eloquence is simply the end of art, and is thus its essence" (41). From this point of view, the distinction that values "imaginative" literature (e.g., poems, stories, plays) over "nonimaginative" (e.g., autobiography, biography, history) misses the central fact about literary art: that its quality is eloquence, not ostensible subject matter.

Burke's struggle against ivory-tower estheticism began with *Counter-Statement* and has been a *Leitmotif* in his work ever since. In *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1950), he said,

> . . . ironically, with much college education today in literature and the fine arts, the very stress upon the pure autonomy of such activities is a roundabout way of identification with a privileged class, serving as a kind of social insignia promising preferment. (*Rhetoric*, 28)

Almost offhandedly, Burke outlines the "ingredients" of *all* verbal acts and thus delineates both what is essential in poetry and what poetry shares with other kind of verbal acts:

> dream (the unconscious or subconscious factors in a poem—the factor slighted by the Aristotelians though by no means left unconsidered . . .)
>
> prayer (the communicative functions of a poem, involving the many considerations of form, since the poet's inducements can lead us to participate in his poem only insofar as his work has a public, or communicative, structure . . .)
>
> chart (the realistic sizing-up of situations that is sometimes explicit, sometimes implicit, in poetic strategies). (*Philosophy*, 6–7)

In other words, every text contains traces of the author's deepest longings and values, goals and aspirations, and view of reality. From this formulation, one can derive a useful heuristic for interpreting a text: What are the author's dreams? What is the prayer? How does the author chart the situation dealt with in the text? And these questions are as valuable in regard to a scholarly paper as they are to a poem. To reiterate: both scholarly papers and poems contain elements of dream, prayer, and chart in various ratios.

In "Rhetoric and Poetics" (1966), Burke sums up:

> I would propose to view the relation between Rhetoric and Poetics thus: The two fields readily become confused, because there is a large area which they share in common. Also, although some works lend themselves more readily to treatment in terms of Rhetoric than in terms of Poetics, or vice versa, even a work of pure science can be shown to have some Rhetorical or Poetic ingredients. (302)

Implications for Teaching. The Burkean question about a student text or a work in the canon is not "What is it?" but "What does it do?" From this master question develop meaningful commentary on and discussion of both canonical works and student "themes." For example, if a writing instructor asks a student, "What do you want this text to do?" then questions about subject matter, tone, mechanics, and form become meaningful, for inadequately developed or inappropriate subject matter can defeat the writer's purpose; a flippant tone regarding a serious topic might be fatal; some audiences discount the subject matter if the paper is riddled with "mechanical" errors; to be acceptable, a scientific report must conform to the genres of the disciplines within which the subject matter falls. In other words, put in the context of purpose, questions about the execution of student papers become meaningful.

Since the purpose of Burkean rhetoric is identification, "argument" becomes the search for agreement rather than eristic, in which there are winners and losers. Students must learn to "talk" the other person's language, identifying insofar as possible with the reader's values, goals, and aspirations. In other words, the goal of writing is to achieve understanding, not victory. An ancillary notion in this regard: to "talk" another's language, one must be stylistically versatile.

With consubstantiality as a goal, students of both composition and literature can set aside the quest for "truth," being satisfied with that exhilarating moment when the reader becomes one with the writer in sympathy and understanding.

One of the most common problems in composition is the student who has a point to make—a purpose—but can think of nothing to say. The Pentad gives student and instructor a wonderful heuristic for opening up the subject, for generating new insights and questions. And the Pentad is equally valuable as a way into literary texts.

Finally, Burke shows us how to desacralize literature and to reunify the canon, so that *Life on the Mississippi* can stand equal with *Huckleberry Finn, The Education of Henry Adams* with *The House of Mirth, In Cold Blood* with *Other Voices, Other Rooms, Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* with *Vineland, The Right Stuff* with *The Left Hand of Darkness.* If the canon values nonfiction as much as fiction, those important nonfiction texts—student themes in composition—will become more interesting and challenging, and composition teachers will gain status alongside their peers who teach "creative writing." In fact, the ultimate logic of Burke's rhetoric would abolish the distinction between composition and creative writing.

In the ongoing attempt to bridge the gap between composition and literature, we find that Burke is the pontifex *par excellence.*

A Representative Anecdote. I am writing these words just two weeks after Burke's death at the age of 96, and I want to end the discussion with an anecdote that characterizes Burke's humanity and his wry sense of humor.

When he was visiting the University of Southern California, a group of us joined him for ice cream. It was a lovely day, and as we sat in the sunshine licking at our cones, Burke told this story:

> The other night I woke up sick as a dog, and minute by minute I felt worse. I thought, "I'm dying." But I wasn't going to die in bed, so I got up and went outside. It was snowing, and I took a shovel and began to clear the walks. The more I shoveled, the better I felt. The world was lovely, white; the trees were laced with snow, and the moon was bright. I went back to bed, feeling wonderful, and I thought to myself, "Well, I'm not dying—this time, anyway."

Notes

1. The discussion of Richards is based on my essay "I. A. Richards, Literary, Theory, and Romantic Composition," which appeared in Fall 1992 issue of *Rhetoric Review.*

2. Among the Romantics are, notably, Ann E. Berthoff, William E. Coles, Jr., Peter Elbow, Ken Macrorie, and Donald Murray. A sympathetic, and in many ways perceptive, brief essay on Richards is "I. A. Richards and the Concept of Literacy," by Berthoff. In particular she admires Richards for having taken the writings of his students seriously enough to analyze them, in *Practical Criticism,* "with as much care as he expended on Swinburne and Shelley, Shakespeare and Donne" (137).

3. For a most unfavorable critique of Richards's scientism, see W.H.N. Hotopf, *Language, Thought, and Comprehension: A Case Study of Writings of I. A. Richards.*

4. *I. A. Richards' Theory of Literature,* by Jerome P. Schiller, is an overwhelmingly favorable study that, nonetheless, begins with this statement about the difficulty of understanding Richards's works and development: "Assuming that Richards' views have not changed so markedly as has his mode of presentation, I pit the clear but misleading early works against the cloudy but suggestive later ones. Thus I can remove the obscurity from the later works by seeing them as providing correctives to the ambiguities and distortions of the earlier" (viii).

5. According to John Paul Russo, Shelley was *fons et origo* of IAR's idealism. He was fond of quoting from "Hymn of Apollo": "I am the eye with which the Universe/Beholds itself and knows itself divine." Richards, says Russo, was attracted to Shelley's modified pacifism and atheism, Platonism, and belief in the mutual dependence of things (12).

6. For example, Richards, with Coleridge, posits something called "inner sense," which is the ability to reflect upon one's reflections (44–45).

Suggested Readings

Berthoff, Ann E., ed. *Richards on Rhetoric.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Excerpts from the works of Richards, chosen by one of his most enthusiastic advocates.

Booth, Wayne C. "Kenneth Burke's Comedy: The Multiplication of Perspectives." *Critical Understanding: The Powers and Limits of Pluralism.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979, 98–137.

An assessment and explication of Burke's work by an eminent literary theorist, with a reply by Kenneth Burke.

Lentricchia, Frank. "Reading History with Burke." *Representing Kenneth Burke.* Selected papers from the English Institute. Ed. Hayden White and Margaret Brose. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982, 119–49.

A recognition of Burke's revolutionary place in literary history.

Russo, John Paul. *I. A. Richards: His Life and Work.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.

The definitive biography of Richards and interpretation of his works.

5 Drawing the Boundaries

I raise the following issues not in a spirit of contention, but as a necessary prologue to my discussion of composition as a discipline of rhetoric (in the same sense that cardiology is a discipline of medicine).

The history outlined in chapter 2 makes one paradox obvious: composition (unlike cardiology) has no institutional "home." Freshman English, advanced composition, and even business and technical writing are typically located in English departments, but until very recently these departments have had no responsibility for composition research or for the history and theory of the field, and even now only perhaps sixty of the hundreds of English departments nationwide offer classes in composition theory and history. Those who identify themselves as compositionists are usually members (often untenured) of English departments and are obligated to participate in the discourse of literary studies; terms such as New Historicism and *écriture féminine* must be parts of their vocabularies; they must know about Fish, Gilligan, Lentricchia, Moi, and Said and keep up with at least *PMLA, TLS,* and *Critical Inquiry.* In short, the compositionist must be "culturally literate" and functional in the world of literary studies. However, for historical reasons that grow increasingly obvious, the reverse is not the case; the literarist has no obligation to understand anything about the history or theory of composition or current issues in the field.

Three recent books enable us to characterize the institutional anomaly of composition/rhetoric and the dilemma of those who claim that field as their own. In *The Making of Knowledge in Composition* (1987), Stephen M. North asks, "What constitutes knowledge in composition, and how is that knowledge attained?" As the title of her book implies, Louise Wetherbee Phelps defines *Composition as a Human Science* (1988) and locates it in the postmodern, poststructuralist age. *Redrawing the Boundaries* (1992), edited by Stephen Greenblatt and Giles Gunn, allows us to see the place and judge the status of composition within the English department and literary humanities in general.

Stephen North asks, in effect, "Whence comes our knowledge in composition?" He identifies three communities from which we gain knowledge of our field: practitioners, scholars (historians, philosophers, critics), and researchers (experimentalists, "who seek to discover generalizable 'laws' which can account for—and, ideally, predict—the ways in which people do, teach, and learn writing"; clinicians, whose "focus is on individual cases"; formalists, who "build models or simulations by means of which they attempt to examine the *formal* properties of the phenomena under study"; and ethnographers, who "produce knowledge in the form of narrative accounts of what happens in . . . communities") (137).

Before considering *The Making of Knowledge* as a political statement regarding the disciplinary status of composition, I would like to give a sense of the tone and substance of the central part of the book, regarding methods for generating or attaining knowledge in composition. If for no other reason, the discussions of canonical works of scholarship and their uses make sections II ("Practice as Inquiry"), III ("The Scholars"), and IV ("The Researchers") valuable, even essential. For example, in *The Development of Writing Abilities (11–18)*, an enormously influential study, James Britton and colleagues developed a schema for classifying the audience for and functions of 2,122 student texts. The audience categories were Self, Teacher, Wider Audience (known), and Unknown Audience; the function categories were, as North explains them, "the expressive (language close to the self); poetic (language as artifact); and transactional (language for doing business in the world)" (26). These categories were tentative, simply a means of sorting out a mass of writings,

> [b]ut practitioners have little need to do this kind of sorting. As a pair of rating scales, the audience and function categories are of little practical use: they don't tell anyone anything particularly useful about what to do. From a Practitioner's point of view, though, it isn't much of a jump from a rating scale to a curriculum guide—from a *de*-scriptive scheme to a set of *pre*-scriptions. Without any particular concern for the schemes' validities, then, or for the fact that in Britton's et al.'s sample, anyway, school writing turned out to be far narrower in its range than the investigators had hoped, so that most of the descriptors went little used, Practitioners have begun to assign "expressive" writing in their courses, or "poetic," or "transactional," and to assign these functions-cum-genres to be written for different audiences. (26–27)

Another example is North's critique of Janet Emig's *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*: "It arguably stands as the single most influential piece of Researcher inquiry—and maybe *any* kind of inquiry in Composition's short history" (197). North makes some telling points about the Emig study. For example, Emig had hypothesized that students would compose in two modes, reflexive and extensive, and she finds that this is indeed the case.

> What is never very clear, of course, is why she should have "found" only two such modes in the first place—and not three or eight or ten—except that she wasn't looking for them. In other words, she doesn't really regard their existence as hypothetical, but simply groups the various activities she does observe under these two headings. This seems a sensible enough strategy for observational purposes, but the fact that it can be done hardly constitutes confirmation in any Experimental sense. (199)

For our purposes, the last two sections—"The Dynamics of Inquiry" and "The Making of Knowledge in Composition"—are, by all odds, the most interesting part of the book. North begins with a critique of Richard Young's essay "Recent Developments in Rhetorical Invention," in *Teaching Composition: Twelve Bibliographical Essays*, edited by Gary Tate. North says that Young is making a power play by arguing that composition has undergone a paradigm shift from "current-traditional" to a new world in which invention is the center. But, argues North, there never was an old paradigm. The power play has had two themes: (1) there is a crisis that justifies (necessitates?) revolution, and (2) the responsibility for the mess lies with the practitioners (321–22). But, asks North, how can a field with such diverse knowledge-makers as his book delineates ever get itself together? How can historians talk to ethnographers, and how can ethnographers talk to formalists? Citing Paul Diesing's *Patterns of Discovery in the Social Sciences*, North says that members of a methodological school can talk to one another—form a community—more easily than members of a (supposed) discipline, and cites as an example the dissolution of "linguistics" into psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and so on (365). According to North, composition is in the Tower of Babel.

However, we can view the field or discipline from another, more productive angle: *that of the questions that we attempt to answer,* regardless of methods. My point is obvious, self-evident. For example, the question "How do writers generate (discover, create, invent) subject matter?" has concerned rhetoricians from Aristotle to Richard Young, and the answers have come from a whole spectrum of methodologies: historical (Sharon Crowley, "The Evolution of Invention in Current-Traditional Rhetoric: 1850–1970"), philosophical (Derrida, *passim*), critical (Dale L. Sullivan, "Attitudes toward Imitation: Classical Culture and the Modern Temper"), experimental (Kathleen Black, "Audience Analysis and Persuasive Writing at the College Level"), clinical (Janet Emig, *The Composing Processes of Twelfth Graders*), and formalist (Flower and Hayes, "A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing"). I have read these studies and believe that I understand all of them, even though I could not, without collaboration, carry out experimental or formalist studies.[1] In other words, composition/rhetoric has a language that by definition consists of mutually intelligible dialects.[2]

If, then, those in composition/rhetoric are not speaking different languages, one can still ask, "Which is the more prestigious dialect, that of the empiricists or that of the rationalists?" The most important journals identified with composition/rhetoric are, by and large, rationalist: *College Composition and Communication, Rhetoric Review, Journal of Basic Writing,* and *Journal of Advanced Composition. Research in the Teaching of English* is almost totally empirical, and *Written Communication* is largely so. *Within* composition/rhetoric, it would seem that the rationalist methods (North calls them "dialectic") are the most widely used and are certainly not viewed as nonstandard or ghetto dialects. Outside the field, of course, the situation is quite different. Empiricists are more likely to be welcome at meetings of the Educational Research Association and within the offices of the National Institute of Education, whereas rationalists predominate within the MLA Division on the Teaching of Writing and in the Conference on College Composition and Communication.

In *Composition as a Human Science,* Louise Phelps deals with essentially the same problem that worried North: the schism arising from differences among knowledge-makers in composition. Whereas North traced the gap (or, in his view, chasm) to differences in methodologies, Phelps argues that the postmodern condition of "questioning that surrounds the theme of rationality as it relates to the possibility of knowledge, the forms of inquiry, the nature of human consciousness, and its relation to the world" (5) is the source of the problem. Having escaped from the trap of positivism and "scientism" (i.e., the claim that the methods of the natural sciences are the only valid ones for developing knowledge about anything), we are left in a world of doubt, confusion, and chaos. Using architecture as a particularly illuminating metaphor, Lester Faigley characterizes the world about which Phelps speaks as

> a labyrinth[ine city] full of diverse and intertwined paths of social interaction without necessary relation to each other, incapable of being understood according to any architectonics. The city is like a huge theater that offers the possibility of playing many different roles but at the same time is extremely stressful and vulnerable to violence. (5)

The residents of this city (or the actors in this theater) have lost the sense of a stable, coherent self; they doubt the universal validity of "logic"; they know that the search for ultimate truth is futile since there is no such Platonic foundation. (The hoary joke is worth repeating. A youngster asks a senior citizen, "What supports the earth?" The senior answers, "A giant turtle." "And what supports that turtle?" "Another turtle," says the senior. "And what supports *that* turtle?" "Sonny, it's turtles all the way down.")

If there is no overarching plan for the city of postmodernism (as there is for Brazilia, as one example), how do we make sense of various neighborhoods, the crazy-quilt pattern of black and Hispanic ghettoes; prim enclaves of well cared-for homes surrounded by industrial plants; Beverly Hills; grimy corner mini-malls, with liquor stores and nail parlors; the super-mall, with Nordstrom's and Nieman-Marcus; bright pink or blue storefront churches and the Crystal Cathedral? The third chapter of this book, "Where We Are," attempts to lay out the crazy-quilt pattern of composition (/rhetoric), a city hardly less pied than Los Angeles.[3]

Phelps's solution to the problem of composition in a postmodern world is sophistic, the solution that Isocrates might advance: abandon foundationalism, the search for absolutes, and seek knowledge contextually. She explains that "[A] contextualist theory is one in which all parts are not only interdependent but mutually defining and transactive, so that through their shifting relationships they continually constitute new parts or elements as well as new structures" (32). Commenting on an essay by Charles Taylor, Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan explain the contextualist position thus:

> Meaning exists for a subject in a situation; it is about something; and it constitutes a part of a field: there are no simple elements of meaning. This view in turn rests on a set of assumptions about the human situation. For Taylor, human life is characterized as an open system. It cannot be shielded from external interference and studied in a vacuum or a scientifically controlled and delimited environment. From this it follows that the exactitude that is open to the human sciences is quite different from that available to the natural sciences. Our capacity to understand is rooted in our own self-definitions, hence in what we are. We are fundamentally self-interpreting and self-defining, living always in a cultural environment, inside a "web of signification we ourselves have spun." There is no outside, detached standpoint from which we gather and present brute data. When we try to understand the cultural world, we are dealing with interpretations and interpretations of interpretations. (7)

In a way, then, the postmodern world itself is a text, inviting multiple readings, and such being the case, the interpretive disciplines provide composition/rhetoric's central methods. Given the inadequacy of *foundationalist* positivism and rationalism, Phelps briefly outlines a "third way": the phenomenology of Paul Ricoeur. In any case, phenomenology has become important in composition/rhetoric, as has ethnography.

The boundaries between ethnography and rhetoric blur as the two fields bleed into one another. To repeat a quotation of ethnographer Elinor Ochs: "Meaning is embedded in cultural conceptions of context, and in this respect the process of acquiring language is embedded in the process of socialization of knowledge" (3). We can translate this into the rhetorical terms of Kenneth Burke: "Meaning is *scenic* and *attitudinal*. Acquisition of language results from *identification*."[4] (Susan Reed-Jones, who studied with both Professor Ochs and me, recently completed a Burkean-ethnographic study of the formation of community in Alcoholics Anonymous.)

Redrawing the Boundaries is a volume that allows us to gauge the scope and influence of composition/rhetoric within the literary establishment, particularly MLA.

Some statistics: The volume is 595 pages, of which 53 (about 10 percent) are devoted to composition/rhetoric. The subtitle of the book is *The Transformation of English and American Literary Studies*. In the eleven-page introduction, four words relate directly to composition: "English and American literary studies, *along with composition studies*, have now become much more self-conscious about the shifting conditions of their own making and remaking, as well as about the comparable conditions that govern the making and remaking of the objects they study" (4; my emphasis). The book includes twenty-one chapters, each representing a focus (e.g., "Medieval Studies," "Romantic Studies," "Feminist Criticism," "Postcolonial Criticism"), two of them on composition: "Composition Studies," by Richard Marius, and "Composition and Literary Studies," by Donald McQuade.

The essays by Marius and McQuade are quite different in substance and spirit, Marius lamenting and McQuade historicizing. Before turning to McQuade's essay and placing it in the context of the volume of which it is a part, I will let Marius speak for himself since he undoubtedly represents a large segment of professional judgment about composition/rhetoric:

> I can think of no book or article devoted to research or theory that has made a particle of difference in the general teaching of com-

> position for the past twenty or thirty years—and I can think of a great many commonly held assumptions in the discipline that are supported by no major research at all. (466)

> The critical, intractable problem is that the teaching of composition in four-year schools is still relegated to part-time, adjunct faculty whose pay is lousy, whose institution loyalty is nil, and whose shifting ranks make it almost impossible for any writing program to develop a stable and trustworthy core of mentors who can provide close and continuing support for younger members of the staff. (467)

> The most important literature for writing teachers is not theoretical or historical; writing teachers depend on textbooks, and it is in the textbooks that we gain the most accurate idea of what is *really* going on in the field. (469)

> A college writing program should not be engaged in teaching students to understand their psyches or to write articles to be published in a wine connoisseur's magazine. It should be directed to having them give close readings of a manageable number of texts, writing drafts about those texts until they emerge with some understanding of what they are reading. (476)

For the most part, McQuade's es[illegible] gives a balanced, useful perspective on the same territory as tha[illegible]versed in the second and third chapters of the present book, but the first four pages are an apposite assessment of "Composition and Literary Studies" within the institution, in effect, a counterstatement to the nineteen essays on literary studies. McQuade says, "Situated marginally as the necessary 'other' along the borders of literature, literary criticism, and rhetoric, composition studies remains one of the most contested territories in the topography of contemporary American academic culture" (484). He goes on to point out that, first, composition underwrites the cost of doing the "major" work of English departments (i.e., literary study)[5] and, second, "composition studies remains one of the few academic disciplines in which outsiders insist on naming and authorizing its activities, without accepting the intellectual responsibility—and institutional consequences—of doing so" (484).

Considering McQuade's position, one finds the nineteen essays central to *Redrawing the Boundaries* paradoxical. On the one hand, they create a theoretical (epistemological?) world in which literary studies and composition/rhetoric would harmoniously exist, and on the other hand, they radically separate themselves from composition/rhetoric.

The nineteenth-century splitting of the canon into "imaginative" and "nonimaginative" made the disastrous separation of "creative" writing

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and composition possible. Reuniting the canon (or abolishing the concept of canon) would give composition the status that it had in the nineteenth century when it was part of the *forensic system.* At Harvard, for instance,

> As its name implies, the forensic system continued the old tradition of debate in the final years of the curriculum, but it was a *written* adaptation of the oral debate. During the 1870s, students attended lectures and recitation on rhetoric in the last three years (freshmen took elocution), but the catalog also specifically prescribed "themes once every four weeks" for sophomores, "once every three weeks" for juniors, and "four forensics" for seniors. Sophomore and junior themes were analogous to the old oral declamations; senior forensics were ordinarily argumentative essays on some controversial topic, corresponding to the old oral debates. At least in their inception, the requirements were thus a kind of written continuation of the ancient tradition of rhetoricals. (Russell, 51–52)

Again and again, the authors in *Redrawing the Boundaries* state that the old, artificial boundary between "imaginative" and "nonimaginative" literature has either disappeared or is in the process of doing so. "[L]iterature is not something given once and for all but something constructed and reconstructed, the product of shifting conceptual entitlements and limits. . . . There are no transparent or absolute rules about which belongs in the zone of the literary and in the zone of the nonliterary" (Greenblatt and Gunn, 5). John Bender diagnoses the results of the Enlightenment's invention of the esthetic and the resulting view of literature "as sensate experience produced and arranged according to principles entirely different from those governing other forms of knowledge. . . . Literature was ideologically, if not actually, confined to the realms of sense, intuition, and imagination, where previously it had comprehended virtually everything written" (87).

Concomitant with the reunion of the canon is the devaluation of authorial genius, if not the whole concept of authorship. Prior to the Romantics, the author was a maker, a craftsperson, whose true Wit was "Nature to advantage dress'd, / What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd." Phrases such as "the death of the author" and references to Foucault's essay "What Is an Author?" occur *passim.* The newly emerging Shakespeare appears not unlike a composition student. For example, here is the postmodern version of the Bard:

> [He] was not an "author" at all in the exalted Renaissance sense but a playwright who functioned in much the same way as others we call dramatists—who produced for his company a steady supply of material over which he exerted none of the rights of own-

> ership. Rather than assume that the bard was born great, scholars are investigating the social, economic, and intellectual factors that worked together to *make* Shakespeare canonical. . . . (Marcus, 48–49)

In sum, *Redrawing the Boundaries* strongly implies that the literary establishment is now ready to value and take seriously, for instance, a freshman theme and Melissa Fay Greene's *Praying for Sheetrock* (a wonderful study of politics and race in McIntosh County, Georgia) as well as Emerson's "The Poet" and *Finnegans Wake;* a composition student as well as a "creative writing" student; any writing student as well as Margaret Atwood. All texts and all writers should now be within the scope of the redrawn boundaries.

However, we are reminded that composition/rhetoric is not only a body of theory, but also an art; the goal of those who profess composition/rhetoric is practice; theory often arises from practice; pedagogy has always been an essential part of the field; the consequences of this pedagogy are a central concern. In other words, composition/rhetoric is primarily concerned with *doing*. The field of literary studies, as limned in *Redrawing the Boundaries,* is concerned with *being*. Those in composition/rhetoric ask, "What are we doing?" *Redrawing the Boundaries* asks, "What is literature?"

Three absences in *Redrawing the Boundaries* make apparent the continuing anomaly of composition/rhetoric *within* literary studies. First, literary studies devalue the empirical and, as a result, English department humanists find themselves unwilling (and in most cases unable) to evaluate their own efforts—for example, the effects of literary study on students' critical thinking or the ability of English majors to write. Evaluation is a major component of composition scholarship. (As Emerson says in "Self-Reliance," "To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you is true for all men—that is genius. Speak your latent conviction, and it shall be the universal sense. . . .")[6] Second, the purposes of literary study become inexpressible, the values of literature being sensed by devotees, but so ineffable as to be unutterable. (As Matthew Arnold says in "Culture and Anarchy," "The idea of perfection as an *inward* condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilization in esteem with us . . ."). Literary studies are thus invulnerable to the ebb and flow of the quotidian. A main theme in composition studies is the attempt to justify what we do in both practical and ethical terms. Third, literary scholarship has no obligation to be consequential (as has scholarship in most other fields), its purpose being fulfilled if it contributes to the dialogue of the establishment. The literary establishment thus can sustain itself by perpetually asking questions about *being* rather than *doing,* which to a large extent explains the continuing gap between literary studies and rhetoric. Composition must always justify itself in terms of achieving its ends, which is precisely why methods of evaluation are a central topic.

Finally, then, we see that the realm of composition is divided in regard to methods, but we see, also, that both empiricism (e.g., formal studies) and rationalism (e.g., ethical arguments) are necessary for making knowledge and that phenomenology may be the "third way." We see, furthermore, that composition, like other humanities, is in the postmodern universe, with its skepticism about foundations for knowing, about individual identity, and about determinate meaning. And last, we as compositionists know that, historically and most often in fact, we are uneasily part of the institution of literary studies.

Notes

1. In collaboration with James D. Williams, I have conducted an extensive experimental study, "Cognitive Style and Written Discourse." *Focuses* 3 (1990): 3–23.

2. Two recent books help "rationalists" acquire the dialect of the empiricists: *Reading Empirical Research Studies: The Rhetoric of Research,* edited by Hayes, Young, Matchett, McCaffrey, Cochran, and Hajduk, and *Composition Research: Empirical Designs,* by Lauer and Ascher.

3. Defining the boundaries of Los Angeles is scarcely less problematic than mapping out the territory of composition. The geographical boundaries are, of course, clear in each case: Los Angeles ends where another municipality or unincorporated county territory begins; composition ends at the limits set by its institutional context. However, residents of Hawthorne, Lawndale, Gardena, and Compton consider themselves Angelenos, as do many residents of cities as far away from Los Angeles as Newport Beach, the quintessential Orange County municipality. Some faculty, even in institutions that give their discipline minimal space, nonetheless consider themselves citizens of composition (/rhetoric).

4. The different vocabulary is significant. In its metaphorical implications, "contextual" leads on to *read* the world like a book; "scenic," on the other hand, evokes a theater. On the one hand, we view life as a written story; on the other, we view it as a drama.

5. Some rough figures give an idea of the importance of composition to English departments. Of the approximately 130 graduate students in the English department at the University of Southern California, 30 or so have independent means (e.g., teaching positions at community colleges); 10 have nonteaching fellowships; 10 have teaching fellowships in the department (assisting regular faculty with large sections); seven have other support within the university; and *73 hold teaching fellowships in the Freshman writing course.* Without composition, a full-scale graduate program in literature would be impossible.

6. At the 1992 convention of the Conference on College Composition and Communication, twenty sessions were devoted to "Assessment/Portfolio Evaluation."

Suggested Readings

Crusius, Timothy W. *A Teacher's Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*. Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1991.

A balanced, insightful survey of the problem of interpretation, not only of texts, but of our culture.

Gere, Anne Ruggles, ed. *Into the Field: Sites of Composition Studies*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1993.

Thirteen contributors discuss the relationships among composition/rhetoric and various philosophical traditions and the problem of subjectivity in the postmodern age.

Horner, Winifred Bryan, ed. *Composition and Literature: Bridging the Gap*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983.

A milestone attempt by rhetoricians and literary scholars to understand, if not reconcile, the differences between the two fields.

Ihde, Don. *Experimental Phenomenology: An Introduction*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986.

An excellent brief (155-page) introduction to the theories and procedures of phenomenology.

6 Poststructural Theories and the Postmodern Attitude in Contemporary Composition

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Over the last two decades, poststructuralism has migrated toward the center of English studies, instituting approaches to literary criticism that have become not only fashionable but increasingly influential, and that, in addition, have begun to project the outlook and interests of English department humanities beyond the merely literary into the larger domain of cultural studies. The potence and appeal of poststructuralist thought (and of the postmodern attitude or sensibility with which it is frequently associated) derives in large measure from poststructuralism's aggressive discontinuity with earlier modes of literary analysis. While poststructuralism plainly has evolutionary roots in structuralist theories of literature and culture (something that is perhaps most evident in a figure such as Roland Barthes, whose work spanned both movements), poststructuralism nonetheless defines itself *against* structuralism and against many of the concepts and assumptions which have shaped literary studies in this century. In its resistant counter-positioning, poststructuralism articulates a powerful set of theoretical concepts of its own.

Chief among these is poststructuralism's unbounded extension of textuality, accomplished by denying or interminably differing the referential functions of language. On this (poststructuralist) view, language is held to refer not to any outward world but only and always to itself, so that linguistic interactions become rhetorical or textual "all the way down" and (by the same token) "reality" becomes a concept understood and analyzed primarily as a linguistic artifact.[1] This "linguistic turn" entails a number of significant consequences, at least three of which have clear import for composition. Poststructuralism's privileging of textuality first of all motivates a radical indeterminacy of meaning. This indeterminacy arises not simply out of the interpretive difficulties facing all interlocutors (the overcoming of which constitutes the task of hermeneutic theory), but rather out of the nature of language itself, such that this more fundamental indeterminacy is even less tractable, less resolvable than that engendered within the hermeneutic relationship. Here the poststructural position relies on the claim, deriving from Derrida, that texts deconstruct themselves, that they always already contain inherently undecidable significations ("aporia") that subvert the text's meaning even in advance of hermeneutic efforts to resolve intersubjective ambiguity or misunderstanding. Along with this indeterminacy of meaning, the poststructural commitment to textuality secondly results in a strong tendency toward epistemological antifoundationalism, an intellectual skepticism characterized by thoroughgoing relativism. In claiming that knowledge must depend upon language (rather than upon a more direct or unmediated access to phenomena) and in maintaining that language is both sequestered from the real world and inherently self-subverting, poststructuralism not only shifts epistemology off the supposedly stable and self-evident foundations laid down in Cartesian philosophy but in so doing also precludes the possibility of establishing *any* epistemological foundation whatsoever: what we know is primarily conditioned by the assumptions and limitations of whatever "language game" we happen to find ourselves caught up in. Finally, poststructuralist theory abandons the idea of the integrated self and advances a much more complex definition of the subject. Moving beyond Barthes's claims as to the "death of the author," poststructuralism calls the entire notion of subjectivity into doubt, speaking instead of "subject positions" that represent the momentary intersection of discursive relationships lying beyond the full knowledge or control of whatever human consciousness happens to "occupy" these discursive spaces.

It is not surprising, given the status of poststructural theories and their growing consolidation within departments of English, that poststructuralist thinking should also exercise increasing influence upon the field of composition. Even though expressivist rhetoric is perhaps still predominant in the day-to-day practices of many composition classrooms, expressivism provides little scope for theoretical analyses that might link its praxis with the critical/theoretical interests of literature-based English departments, particularly as these interests are themselves undergoing significant revision. By contrast, poststructuralism provides ample opportunity to make theoretical connections between literary studies and composition. Questioning as it does the meaning of texts, the nature of reality, and the status of the subject, poststructuralism addresses issues that are of focal interest to both fields. Over the last ten years, poststructuralist thought has therefore gained increasing prominence within composition journals and in a number of essay collections and monographs: Atkins and Johnson's *Writing and Reading Differently* (1985), Donahue and Quandahl's *Reclaiming Pedagogy* (1989), Crowley's *A Teacher's Introduction to Deconstruction* (1989), Harkin and Schilb's *Contending with Words* (1991), Hurlbert and Blitz's *Composition and Resistance* (1991), and Gere's *Into the Field* (1993). Throughout these sources we may trace a number of poststructuralist directions for composition theory and practice.

First of all, through its focus upon textuality, poststructuralism reinstates a strong emphasis upon reading as a central commitment of the composition classroom. This commitment arises out of the importance within the deconstructionist project of close reading, and as such it recalls the stress which current-traditional rhetoric placed upon close reading as this form of analysis was originally motivated under New Critical literary theory. However, as Andrew P. Debicki argues, deconstructive close reading enters composition pedagogy with a markedly different agenda in mind:

> Both the New Critic and the deconstructivist operate within the tradition of close reading, which started under the auspices of the former; but whereas the New Critic looks for and invites the student to seek resolutions and unification, the deconstructivist asks the students to join in a process of questioning, undermining, and extending the text—and *all* texts. (182)

In rupturing traditional "logocentric" reading practices that tend to enforce the text's power over the reader, poststructural approaches to reading encourage the student to read against the text, to question its assumptions and to identify what Barbara Johnson has termed the text's "warring forces of signification" (5).

Along with this sharpening of students' abilities as readers, a poststructuralist conception of reading may also permit a more holistic appreciation of literacy, thus enabling a fuller understanding of the interrelationship of reading and writing. David Kaufer and Gary Waller argue, for example, that the traditional standing of reading within composition theory encourages a debilitating fallacy—"the assumption that reading and writing serve one another *asymmetrically*"—which they submit undermines the potential effectiveness of composition instruction. For those who hold this erroneously asymmetric understanding of reading, "[r]eading is the way in which we evaluate (not develop or complete) writing skill; writing is the way in which we evaluate or express (not develop or extend) reading skill" (71). What Kaufer and Waller advocate, and what they claim a deconstructive approach to reading allows, is a richer and less restricted understanding of literacy skills, one that recognizes not simply the symmetry but also the inseparableness of reading and writing, an inseparability which they characterize in the assertion that "to write is to read is to write" (71).

In addition to encouraging students to question the assumptions of texts and to adopt a holistic understanding of the seamless nature of reading/writing, the poststructural approach to reading may also be of more immediate personal benefit to students. Thus Paul Northam argues that deconstructive close reading can have important *affective* benefits for students, because such reading engenders "powerful incentives to inspiration":

> Deconstructive reading, be it of a literary text or of the world, is the most intensive kind being practiced today. But more importantly, accepting Derrida's position on the nature of language leads students to the cultivation of a sense of playful intellectual joy in interpretation and a competence in their ability to trace figuration. (126)

Northam finds that this deconstructive attitude toward reading is "more likely than are logocentric modes of interpretation" to convince students that their perspectives are "original and insightful," which in turn will enable them to "believe that their ideas are worth stating" (126–27). In privileging inspiration, Northam's advocacy of deconstructive reading resonates strongly with the affective bent of expressivist or vitalist composition pedagogy: "This caring, which can be stimulated by the process of deconstruction/inspiration for which I have argued . . . will result, I am convinced, in improvement in writing" (127).

Poststructural and postmodern approaches to composition are also marked by their concern for the issue of ideology. This concern is especially central to neo-Marxist formulations of postmodern thought, and here the work of James Berlin stands out for its rigorous and persistent exploration of the connections between ideology and rhetoric and composition. Berlin describes ideology in fairly standard terms, defining it primarily as a function of power relationships:

> Ideology . . . always includes conceptions of how power should—again, in the nature of things—be distributed in a society. Power here means political force but covers as well social forces in everyday contacts. Power is an intrinsic part of ideology, defined and reinforced by it, determining, once again, who can act and what can be accomplished. ("Rhetoric" 479)

Berlin maintains that ideological power relationships "are inscribed in the discursive practices of daily experience—in the ways we use language and are used (interpellated) by it in ordinary parlance" (479). Since these power relationships permeate and control discourse (both in the "common sense" perspective of our use *of* language and in the more postmodern or deconstructive sense of being used *by* language), Berlin asserts that "any examination of a rhetoric must first consider the ways its very discursive structure can be read so as to favor one version of economic, social, and political arrangements over other versions" (477). For Berlin, this means reversing what he finds to be the traditional standing of rhetoric and ideology:

> More recently, the discussion of the relation between ideology and rhetoric has taken a new turn. Ideology is here foregrounded and problematized in a way that situates rhetoric within ideology, rather than ideology within rhetoric. (477)

In situating rhetoric "within" ideology, Berlin makes it quite clear that rhetoric is also secondary and subservient: "A rhetoric can never be innocent, can never be a disinterested arbiter of the ideological claims of others because it is always already serving certain ideological claims" (477). So pervasive is ideology that "rhetoric cannot escape the ideological question" (493), cannot find a place outside or apart from ideology.

For Berlin and others, the centrality of ideology has immediate consequences in terms of the objectives of composition pedagogy. Berlin maintains that "the liberated consciousness of students is the only educational objective worth considering" (492), and he thus recommends that the students' experience within the composition course be structured in such a way as to allow them to "critically examine their quotidian experience in order to externalize false consciousness" (491). Similarly, Patricia Bizzell seeks to shift the focus of composition pedagogy away from the linguistic or psycholinguistic (associated, respectively, with current-traditional and with cognitivist rhetoric) and toward sociolinguistic practices that are overtly political and ideological. Bizzell asserts that "[t]he very notion of ideology points to broad-ranging social effects that present themselves to the affected as simply 'the way things are'" ("Review," 485) and suggests that unrecognized dimensions of social reality—ideology—may exert significant but indiscernible force over student writers. As Bizzell comments, "My students do not have willful, purposive control over everything that affects them as they attempt to write for the academic discourse community" ("Review," 485). Elsewhere Bizzell argues that the discourse conventions promoted in traditional schooling are themselves a form of ideology, a "cultural hegemony" representing "the selective valuation and transmission of world views" ("Cognition," 237). To counter the effects of such hegemony, Bizzell suggests that students need to recognize how discourse conventions reflect not some absolute reality but rather the contingent practices of a particular discourse community, and for Bizzell this sort of discourse analysis entails an overtly ideological or political form of pedagogy:

> To point out that discourse conventions exist would be to politicize the classroom—or rather, to make everyone aware that it is already politicized. World views would become more clearly a matter of conscious commitment, instead of unconscious conformity, if the ways in which they are constituted in discourse communities were analyzed. ("Cognition," 238)

Of course, in giving such weight and centrality to a single concept, this ideological approach to composition inevitably encounters the issue of self-referentiality: the problem of how an ideological rhetoric negotiates its own ideology. In general, those committed to this position have faced this issue in an open and deliberate manner. Particularly vexing is the question of how composition instructors are to present their own ideologies and authority within the classroom. As Nina Schwartz has pointed out, "If the space of the classroom is already filled with politics—with unspoken lessons about power and authority—then we would do well to take as our topic of consideration the 'what-goes-without-saying' of our own enterprise" (70). Joseph Harris and Jay Rosen suggest that it is possible for composition instructors to guide students into experiences through which they may develop a critical perspective on discursive ideology and cultural hegemony:

> We are sometimes placed in ways that let us see certain texts or events in a different or unusual light—and it is at those points that we can begin to resist the power of discourses, to transform their rules, to become critics. As teachers of writing, our task is to arrange such meetings in our classrooms, which are, after all, not only zones of contact but spaces of possibility. (66–67)

But others committed to ideological approaches to rhetoric are less sanguine regarding the chances of instructors avoiding the ideological snares of the politicized classrooms. For one thing, because pedagogy is itself inevitably imbued with the tincture of ideology, teaching can too readily take the form of benevolent oppression. Bizzell, for example, suggests not only that students may be incapable of recognizing the ideological forces entrapping them, but that their teachers may actually be complicit in helping to sustain these forces:

> Ideologies get enforced hegemonically—that is, they tend to operate along the fault lines of social power, especially tense and taut where slippages are imminent. Yet those who are being kept down by dominant ideologies may be so far unaware of the pressure as to assent to derogatory depictions of themselves and to aspire to resemble their oppressors; while the "oppressors" may genuinely see themselves as benevolent, or as equally powerless. ("Review," 485–86)

Because neither students nor instructors can get "outside" ideology, and because ideology tends invariably to enforce cultural hegemony, there is always the possibility alluded to in this passage, that the composition classroom may exert a kind of benevolent oppression upon students, and particularly upon those who do not already share the values of the hegemonic power structure. Other writers express even greater suspicion regarding the motives of composition or literacy programs. Thus Elspeth Stuckey argues in *The Violence of Literacy* that oppression of the sort to which Bizzell refers is *not* "benevolent," not so much an anomaly within composition pedagogy as a governing, if unrecognized or unacknowledged, purpose of literacy itself:

> The theory in this study is that literacy is a system of oppression that works against entire societies as well as against certain groups within given populations and against individual people. . . . Literacy oppresses, and it is less important whether or not the oppression is systematic and intentional, though often it is both, than that it works against freedom. Thus, the questions of literacy are questions of oppression; they are matters of enforcement, maintenance, acquiescence, internalization, revolution. (64)

This radical perspective distrusts not just certain forms of literacy or certain types of rhetoric pedagogy, but literacy itself, finding in it little more than a concealed form of social violence.

In addition to reconceiving the role of reading within the writing classroom and to giving greater significance to ideological considerations, poststructural and postmodern approaches to composition also seek to extend the discursive scope of composition, moving it beyond present classroom concerns and beyond traditionally accepted genres of writing. Randall Knoper has thus argued that deconstruction must be used not only to open up the student's writing process but also to reshape, quite literally, the actual texts that students produce. In Knoper's view, present applications of deconstructive theory to composition are generally unsatisfactory in that they are achieved "by invoking 'process' and then tucking deconstruction away in backstage activities of reading (rather than writing), invention, and revision" (131). For Knoper, this effort to consign deconstruction to a supplementary function merely wastes its distinctive power on the desert air of contemporary composition pedagogy: "If deconstruction is presented as a support for composing practices we already teach, and for a familiar model of good prose, where is the difference?" (132). The problem, according to Knoper, is that the strategy of accommodating deconstruction within standard practices "appears to have little bearing on what 'essays' might look like, and leaves the familiar and unexamined aims of 'improvement' toward 'better' writing intact" (132). By contrast, Knoper would prefer to forego the outworn progressive notions of "improving" student writing and to recognize instead that deconstruction is "concerned with writing processes as they appear on the page and, importantly, writing processes that dismantle the forms of the book and essay" (132). In consequence, he advocates a shift from the processes that might lead to "well-composed and unified" (132) essays (even when these processes are supported by deconstructive techniques) and toward products that concretely reflect the full stylistic and rhetorical panoply of deconstructive writing:

> To extend deconstruction into student writing would mean taking student texts as never finished—in the sense of a smooth surface, a clinched argument, or a rounded discussion—but instead encouraging the rough edge that signals trouble, vexing complications, contradictions, allowing the insecure articulations that hover around an undecidability. The pretense of certainty a thesis has, the security of a conclusion, the assertion of a mastery over the text would give way. (136–37)[2]

While Knoper draws on deconstructive theory in order to subvert traditional genres of academic discourse, others appeal to poststructuralism's general extension of textuality to argue that the scope of composition should be broadened to encompass social as well as more traditional written texts. This, in fact, is what accounts for the growing interest among postmodern compositionists on possible relationships between composition and cultural studies. Here two approaches may be identified, one that emphasizes the ideological implications of cultural studies and the other that focuses upon the interest of cultural studies in exploring manifestations of popular culture. The former approach is advocated by James Berlin, who has suggested that cultural studies may be defined as "the way discursive formations are related to power or, alternatively, the study of language's uses in the service of power" ("Composition," 100). Given Berlin's commitment, noted above, to ideologically situated rhetorics, it is not surprising that he finds this formulation of cultural studies—one centrally concerned with power relationships—to reflect "the very definition of rhetoric many of us in composition are now invoking" nor that he therefore argues that cultural studies and composition can be "mutually enriching" (100).

John Trimbur advocates a somewhat different approach. While recognizing cultural studies' involvement with issues of power and ideology, Trimbur maintains that cultural studies should have less to do with the political than with the "popular." Trimbur suggests that "[f]or cultural studies, the hegemonic discourses and practices of metropolitan experience are indeed ideologically charged, but they are 'leaky' sites of struggle and ongoing negotiation where no outcomes can be guaranteed in advance" (130). Within the complexity of the postmodern scene, "the notion of the popular refers to a kind of nomadic subjectivity that attempts, interdiscursively and episodically, to make a social world cohere from the fractured totality of contemporary life" (130). Where Berlin might see cultural studies in terms of the unmasking of contending ideologies, Trimbur associates it instead with a more formative or recuperative purpose. For Trimbur, "the popular points to the intersection of the private and public, the personal and political, the subaltern and the dominant in metropolitan experience" (129) and as such it can "reinsert a sense of agency that will not be unproblematically incorporated in an increasingly regulated social order" (130). In either case—whether one approaches cultural studies from an ideological or a popular stance—the implication for composition is a substantial enlargement of what counts as text, a movement towards the interpretation of social texts as a central concern of composition pedagogy.

But perhaps the most profound textual extension that poststructural theories would initiate within composition is one that invokes not simply a reconception of genres or a movement into the realm of social and cultural texts, but rather the creation of an entirely new mode of textuality. Such is the project of poststructural feminist approaches to composition in their desire to develop a form of writing—an *écriture féminine*—that would challenge the hegemony of patriarchal or phallocentric discourse. Lillian Bridwell-Bowles has thus called for greater diversity within academic discourse, arguing that "writing classes (and the whole field of composition studies) must employ richer visions of texts and composing processes" and that compositionists must "envision a socially and politically situated view of language and the creation of texts—one that takes into account gender, race, class, sexual preference, and a host of issues that are implied by these and other cultural differences" (349). Drawing upon the work of Luce Irigaray and Helene

Cixous, Bridwell-Bowles suggests that *l'écriture féminine* may be able to accomplish this revolutionary new discourse, one that will permit radical transformations of thought and social relationships by offering alternatives to the limitations of patriarchal language and its linear rationality:

> Perhaps with time, poststructuralist revolutions in thinking about our culture will influence our language so much that we will come to see personal writing, nonlinear patterns of organization, writing that contains emotion, writing that closes the gap between subject and object, writing that does something "with" and not "to" the reader, and all the other possibilities yet to come as having equal status with carefully reasoned, rational argument. (353)

Others who advocate a feminist discourse are more circumspect in their assessment as to the possibility of establishing *écriture féminine* as an alternative to the discursive practices that now dominate the field of composition. Lynn Worsham, for example, discounts the hope that composition and *écriture féminine* can coexist in any form of "sustained contact" (94). Such contact, Worsham argues, would result in the obliteration of one or the other:

> Either composition would neutralize the radical potential of *écriture féminine* in an effort to appropriate it to serve the current aims of the profession and, beyond this, the university, or *écriture féminine* would cast such suspicion on the whole enterprise of composition studies as an accomplice of phallocentrism that composition would be transformed beyond recognition. It would not be entirely inaccurate to say that composition would cease to exist as we know it, and by implication the university, along with its constituent discourses, would come tumbling down. (94)

Worsham believes that the first of these outcomes is more likely, that "[c]omposition theorists will effectively manipulate *écriture féminine* to shore up the foundations of their field as a modernist discipline committed to the old dreams of the Enlightenment" (99). But Worsham nonetheless sees *écriture féminine* as having potential significance to composition. Even if *écriture féminine* cannot displace phallocentric discourse, it can still fulfill an important role in keeping it off-balance. Rather than serving as a pedagogical model for composition, *écriture féminine* can, Worsham asserts, stand as "a force of resistance that indirectly calls into question the needs and desires governing the field" (98). As such, *écriture féminine* constitutes an important potential extension of the discursive range of composition studies.

It may be apparent from the foregoing discussion that poststructural theories and the postmodern attitude together constitute a powerful new influence upon composition studies. Indeed, precisely because of their innovative force, poststructuralism and postmodernism present a direct and in many respects hostile challenge to contemporary composition. To understand the general outline of this challenge, it is helpful to examine the ways in which advocates of postmodern composition describe the relationship between the theories and practices they propose and those which currently shape composition. *Contending with Words*, a recent volume published by the MLA, is particularly useful for this purpose, since, as its subtitle suggests, it addresses *Composition and Rhetoric in a Postmodern Age*.

One thing that is immediately apparent, even in the introduction to this work, is the suspicion which is evinced toward contemporary theories and practices of composition and rhetoric. The editors, Patricia Harkin and John Schilb, point to a "constellation of institutional preconditions for composition and rhetoric in a postmodern age" (1), two of which are particularly salient. The first of these they identify as the inadequate response by American universities to the "literacy crisis" of the mid-seventies. Harkin and Schilb argue that the "freshman composition 'system'" in American universities was incapable of meeting the challenges posed by "millions of Americans who could not read or write any language at all," by "open-admissions policies, with changing demographies," by "declining scores on standardized measures," and by what they refer to as "technological orality" (1–2). While Harkin and Schilb concede that it is not altogether surprising that the freshman composition system was unable to solve what amounts to a major national problem, they nonetheless see the literacy crisis not simply as a failure of "traditional humanism" (2) but as a failure dictated by the institutional interests of composition itself. Using an analogy to Michel Foucault's claims (in *Madness and Civilization*) regarding forms of institutional oppression, Harkin and Schilb argue that the term *literacy crisis* "functioned as an umbrella to cover and isolate those persons who, for whatever reason, did not have 'normal' standards for discourse" and that it is therefore "hardly surprising that academic institutions were unable (or even disinclined) to 'mediate' the culture's postulated values to such a disparate audience" (3). Beyond this, however, Harkin and Schilb argue that the inability of composition to resolve the literacy crisis is institutionally self-interested and self-serving. They suggest, following an analysis by Paul Noack, that "to the extent that an institution succeeds in maintaining a state of crisis, it will succeed in maintaining itself" (3) and on this rationale make the claim that the university system, and composition in particular, "managed" the literacy crisis "by creating new institutions, books, journals, Ph.D. programs, and conferences to deal with smaller and narrower aspects of 'literacy' ":

> Composition studies has now become a fully authorized academic field and a site of inquiry in its own right. Still, however, millions of Americans cannot read or write any language at all, college-board scores continue to fall, and discursive behavior remains a way to isolate members of our culture, in spite of the things they have learned how to do with words. The institution has managed to sustain itself; the problems are still there. (3)

Whatever the accuracy or fairness of this assessment, it is important to recognize that Harkin and Schilb's critique of composition—and that of many of the contributors to the volume—is, for all its vehemence, somewhat less revolutionary than it may at first appear. Indeed, their condemnation of contemporary composition re-enacts a fairly time-honored maneuver in the lengthy struggle within English departments between the interests of literature and rhetoric: that is, the attempt in the name of literary theory to colonize composition and to suppress its claim to institutional or disciplinary autonomy.

The colonizing maneuver to which I refer is most immediately evident in the second "institutional pre-condition" which Harkin and Schilb identify as leading into postmodern composition and rhetoric. This precondition also involves a failure of sorts, this time not the failure of compositionists to resolve the national literacy crisis but the failure of literary scholars to find suitable employment:

> For many teachers trained in literature, what did change things was the condition of the job market. More precisely, they had to teach a significant amount of composition to secure any position at all. Fluctuations in the market for English teachers occasioned a situation that left many highly trained literary theorists with teaching loads largely made up of composition. (4)

What this suggests, of course, is that, at least for junior faculty, the postmodern revolution in English studies shares with other revolutions the embarrassment of having burst forth in the wrong place: not Germany but Russia, not the MLA in December but the 4C's in March. But it also indicates the extent to which the migration of postmodern theory into composition studies represents not simply the traditional wisdom of making a virtue of necessity but the traditional hierarchy that places "highly trained literary theorists" above those who deserve (or, worse yet, *choose*) "teaching loads largely made up of composition." From the perspective of English departments' traditional commitment to literature and literary theory, Harkin's and Schilb's condemnation of the alleged failure of compositionists to deal with the literacy crisis is both convenient and attractive in that it justifies the displacement of such compositionists by those whose interests are more closely associated with literary (or, now, cultural) studies.

In this recolonization of composition by literary theory and by erstwhile literary scholars, we can also trace an even longer tradition, one that reinstates the Socratic attack on rhetoric as being void, without a topic or content of its own. There is very little in *Contending with Words* that resonates with either classical or modern concepts of rhetoric; as Sharon Crowley points out, "postmodern rhetorical theories question the validity of the very concepts with which traditional rhetorics began—author, intention, purpose, audience, message, common ground, and so forth" ("Reimagining," 192–93). Indeed, the idea of disciplinarity is itself a target for these writers. Thus Harkin calls for a "Postdisciplinary Politics of Lore" (124–38) in which Stephen North's notion of "practitioner lore" would replace any attempt to define a corpus of disciplinary theory, while Crowley suggests that "[i]f we are to rewrite composition theory for a postmodern age, we must also stand ready to dismiss the work of composition theorists who confine their thinking to traditional rhetoric or psychology" ("Reimagining," 193). Where modern rhetoric and composition recognized itself as *cross*-disciplinary, postmodern composition prides itself on being radically undefined and *anti*-disciplinary: "most of the writers in this volume agree that alternatives to disciplinarity must be in contention" (Sosnoski, 205). It is altogether likely that this contention will take place under the purview of the literary-theoretical interests of English departments, and will thus focus upon the study of literary and cultural "texts." Harkin and Schilb, for example, address *Contending with Words* to "college and university teachers of English who believe that the study of composition and rhetoric is not merely the service component of the English department but also an inquiry into cultural values" (1). From this perspective, postmodern composition becomes a loose variant of cultural studies without theoretical or ethical commitments of its own—simply a site wherein various ideological forces may "contend."

Most immediately, then, postmodern approaches to composition offer a general critique of contemporary rhetoric and composition that is forceful, overt, and hostile, one that raises both institutional and theoretical questions as to the legitimacy of present-day composition practices. Beyond this general critique, however, I would argue that postmodern composition presents two other challenges to rhetoric and composition, challenges which, if less overt, are no less significant.

The first has to do with pedagogy. Composition has always defined itself, even more than rhetoric, as a teaching discipline, one in which pedagogical practice is a foremost concern. It is not apparent, even in essays which specifically concern themselves with the question of how postmodern theories might be brought into the composition classroom, that postmodern composition can develop a body of distinct pedagogical practices to replace those which it denounces in contemporary composition. Part of this has to do with the nature of postmodernist theoretical commitments, since these tend to deny the possibility of formulating a positive statement of pedagogical principles. It is not without significance, for example, that in *A Teacher's Introduction to Deconstruction,* Crowley herself questions whether deconstruction can motivate pedagogical practice in any manner other than through a negative critique of existing procedures:

> The performance of this "reading" of traditional pedagogy may be as far as deconstruction will take us. I am not sure that a deconstructive pedagogy can be realized—the term itself is an oxymoron. (*Teacher's,* 45)

Similarly, J. Hillis Miller, who echoes Crowley in admitting that he would have difficulty conceiving what "a 'deconstructive' textbook of freshman writing would be like" ("Composition," 55), advocates a "rhetoric of reading" that acknowledges its own fore-defeatedness:

> . . . rhetoric is not so much the climax of a progressive mastery of language both for reading and for writing as it is the place in which the impossibility of mastery is definitively encountered. The road called "rhetoric" is always marked "impassable" or "under construction; pass at your own risk" or, as it is succinctly put on signs in England, "road up!" ("Two Rhetorics," 112)

This tendency to define postmodern pedagogy primarily in terms of what it is not is perhaps best represented in Victor J. Vitanza's "Three Countertheses" to contemporary practices in composition:

> What we want is a way to proceed without foundations and without criteria (the first counterthesis) and without knowing as a subject (the second) and without conventional theory and pedagogy (the third). What we want, then, is not a discipline or metadiscipline but a "nondiscipline," which—heretofore referred to as a postpedagogy—is more accurately labeled (after Lyotard) a paralogic pedagogy. . . . These strategies would attempt to lessen the oppressive forces of discursive language; would attempt to be discontinuous, random, and filled with fragmented thoughts and digressions; would attempt to call each previous statement into

> (rhetorical) questions; and would attempt to use sophistic ruse and counterruse. (165)

Thus, while postmodernists assert the need to subvert pedagogical principles cast within the dominant discourse, these same theorists find it difficult to define a pedagogy except as a negative form of the pedagogical theories they would overcome.

But, even if we overlook the question of whether postmodernity can, according to its own principles, motivate or justify pedagogical practice, there is still a striking difference between the lush heterogeneity of postmodern literary theory and the relative barrenness of the pedagogical practices it advocates for composition. For all that postmodernism values difference and otherness, the proposed postmodern pedagogy is remarkably repetitious of approaches and procedures that have been used for years in various branches of composition pedagogy. In advocating "rhetoric as reading," for example, J. Hillis Miller replicates the current-traditional penchant for close reading of model texts:

> Reading is not rhetoric as putting together, composition, but rhetoric as taking apart, decomposition. It is easy to see, however, that no skillful composition is possible without that prior act of decomposition practiced through reading models of composition by others. . . . Those involved in programs in writing either must make sure that reading is being well taught by their colleagues in literature or must teach reading themselves. ("Composition," 43)[3]

Similarly, Kaufer and Waller suggest that deconstructive close-reading should be "naturalized" in the composition classroom, much in the manner that New Criticism assumed its close-reading was "natural." They suggest that deconstructive rhetoric "can adopt, provisionally, the same strategy" (85) and note that "[o]ur quarrel with New Criticism on this level is that its close-reading habits were just not close enough" (86). Even though (as noted above in the citation from Debicki) the deconstructive reading of model texts aims at difference and subversion rather than at resolution and unity, this call for the priority of analyzing model texts—for "naturalizing" an even closer close-reading—reinstates a mode of pedagogy identified as one of the weakest features of current-traditional rhetoric—that feature, indeed, which provided much of the impetus for the pedagogical reforms instituted through the process movement. A focus upon the close reading of model texts (and in particular, one assumes, literary texts affording maximal opportunity for deconstructive maneuvering) not only encourages the recolonization of composition by literary theory—a return to composition as a facade for survey courses in literature or cultural studies—but also displaces the major theme of process pedagogy: the student-centered writing workshop in which students learn to write *by* writing. While there is much perhaps to be achieved by inserting the sophisticated complexity of deconstructive analysis into the composition classroom, we need to be aware of the potential for nullifying other gains which have accrued through the widespread adoption of process theory; we need, that is, to recognize the potential consequences of attempting to transplant a postmodern consciousness into the lurching corpse of text-centered current-traditional pedagogy.

This is not to say that poststructuralism and postmodernism offer no worthwhile innovations for composition pedagogy. Kaufer and Waller, for example, suggest a useful extension of a common argumentation assignment, one in which students first read "a strongly argued, highly persuasive text representing one side of an issue" and then receive a second text in which "the image of the opponent is far stronger and now rivals in attractiveness that of the original advocate" (79). This, Kaufer and Waller assert, leads students to confront the "incorrigibility assumption" whereby knowledge is taken to represent (from the postmodern viewpoint, fallaciously) a harmonious whole that is not subject to revision. The resulting epistemic impasse is one that students acknowledge "only with great reluctance" (79), and so, to help students address this dilemma, Kaufer and Waller offer them "training in discrimination, or training in how to classify conflicting knowledge":

> Is the conflict a matter of semantics (which forces them to dig into the insides of words and expressions), of factual evidence (which forces them to consider the observable facts that bear on resolving the conflict), or of value (which forces them to consider the larger goals of the parties to the dispute)? (80)

This lesson is certainly promising, and it undoubtedly reflects postmodern attitudes and terminology: e.g., the emphasis upon the interplay of "different" positions, the need for students to have "training in discrimination," and, perhaps most important, the underlying agenda for the assignment, which, in the authors' words, is to ask the students "to abandon entirely any semblance of 'incorrigibility' " (80). All of this is of potential benefit to students, both as writers and as critical thinkers, for, as Kaufer and Waller point out, "How we represent conflict has a great deal to do with how we try to overcome it—and how we try to accommodate our opponent in the process" (80). This much being said, however, it remains unclear just how the Kaufer and Waller assignment is to be seen as being entirely or even largely conditioned by poststructual or postmodern thought. While the idea of using a sequence of texts is an interesting wrinkle, this innovation does not in itself bear any necessary relationship to postmodern theory, and the assignment in fact appeals to certain themes—the intended argument of a definable subject ("the opponent"), for example, or the reliance upon "factual evidence"—that many postmodernists might be reluctant to countenance. The heart of the assignment, the activity whereby students engage (*as* subjects, it should be noted) a variety of opposing viewpoints, is one that can be traced back to the *Dissoi Logoi*. The virtues of this assignment can thus hardly be ascribed to its "postmodern" lineage, simply because the assignment is so much a palimpsest, so much overwritten with other theories and approaches to composition.

Unfortunately, pedagogical endeavors that *are* more recognizably postmodern, that avoid the impurity or compromise of the example just cited, are apt to be so totalizing in their critique of current practices as to leave no recourse except to a state of ongoing pedagogical crisis. Consider, for instance, Vincent B. Leitch's discussion (in "Deconstruction and Pedagogy") of the implications of the "incorrigibility fallacy," the same postmodern theme that, in a rather more diffident guise, provided the basis for the Kaufer and Waller lesson. Leitch suggests that in opposing the dogma of incorrigibility deconstructive teaching would require an "'epistemological transformation'" that would expose the " 'fictitious' quality of our knowledge: its differential character" (22–23). This epistemological transformation would result, one gathers, in a concomitant transformation of the composition classroom, at least as it has heretofore been understood:

> Out of such deconstructive thinking comes a certain strategic stance and practice for pedagogy. Nothing is ordained, natural, unalterable, monumental. Everything is susceptible to critique and transformation. "Arrangements," whether traditional or contemporary, can be "rearranged." To criticize is to cause crisis. In order to be successful this teaching—suspicious, critical, discriminating, optimistic—must pass to students. (23)

Lest his proposal be misunderstood as simply a more radical variant of the student-centered classroom, Leitch is quick to point out that the deconstructive classroom he foresees must resist *any* centering, any effort to stabilize or naturalize its practice, any attempt to bring closure to the ongoing state of crisis and critique that stands as the ideal form of classroom experience:

> As classroom discourse, deconstructive teaching ought in turn to submit its own language to depropriation. There might follow tactical assaults on and transformations of pedagogical grammar and syntax through excursive rhetorics and impure styles. So-

> cratic dialogue, dialectical conversation, would probably be disrupted. Intelligibility would be put in constant jeopardy. If not "depropriated," pedagogical discourse risks ordaining and naturalizing its own critiques. (23)

If we take Leitch at his word here, if we understand as seriously meant his claim that the deconstructive classroom should serve the objective of placing intelligibility in "constant jeopardy," then it is difficult to escape the conclusion that such poststructural/postmodern pedagogy is not simply opposed but actually inimical to the commitments that characterize contemporary rhetoric and composition.

But if postmodernism raises a direct pedagogical challenge to contemporary composition, a second challenge, although less direct, is even more crucial. This challenge goes to the fundamental legitimacy of rhetoric, to its claim, extending perhaps as far back as the Corax myth, to exercise an emancipatory function that can be distinguished from the mere exercise of power. As the foregoing discussion has indicated, postmodern approaches to composition conceive language primarily in terms of power and thus read texts—whether literary or social—as inextricably situated within a matrix of power relationships. Rhetoric may be used in an eristic fashion to advance one's own ideological position or to attack competing positions, but, because the rhetorical is seen as always already enclosed within the ideological, rhetoric surrenders any ethical or critical ability to interrogate ideology in a manner that would transcend self-interest. Victor J. Vitanza, for instance, not only questions the possibility of a "liberating rhetoric" but doubts whether such a rhetoric would even be desirable:

> if a liberating rhetoric is possible, I do not think that it should/ought to be realized, that is, as a traditionalist, realist attempt to realize it. More important, I do not think it should/ought to be longed after (especially nostalgically, as a modernist does). Instead, let us engage in postmodern rhetorics. Let's be pagan. Let's be hysterical. (Let's engage in ruse after ruse.) Instead of a liberating rhetoric, there can/should/ought to be rhetorics of resistance. (169, *n*11)

What is at stake in postmodern composition is a shift in outlook whose importance it would be difficult to overestimate, an abandonment of the god-terms of modernity—emancipation and enlightenment—in pursuit of resistance, the god-term of postmodernity. This shift in objectives entails a parallel shift in tactics. Postmodern rhetoric is less interested in formative critique, in attempts to articulate modes of rationality or forms of life that might stand as substantial alternatives to the practical-instrumental rationality characteristic of modern industrial civilization, than it is in stratagems of subterfuge and bewilderment, in diverse counter-discourses that prefer to harry the hegemonic power structure with "ruse after ruse" without proposing any fully articulated alternative. This form of "uncritical theory" (to adopt Christopher Norris's term) gives pause even to some of those compositionists who associate themselves with the postmodernist project. John Trimbur, for example, has expressed concern "that postmodernism has based its authority on a kind of intellectual blackmail that makes it difficult to argue against the current climate of radical disbelief without sounding hopelessly naive, unfashionable, and incipiently totalitarian." While Trimbur believes that it would be impossible to return to "the great metanarratives of rationality and human emancipation," he suggests that "we need nonetheless to acknowledge the price of postmodernism's radical critique and the limits of its strategies of subversion and demystification" (131).

Others may wish not simply to acknowledge but to question this price and to ask furthermore whether a postmodern composition could long sustain itself. Norris has argued cogently that the postmodern rejection of enlightenment values such as "good faith, reason, and open dialogical exchange" is nonetheless parasitic upon these same values:

> That literary theorists of a 'radical' bent should now be engaged in a wholesale campaign to denigrate such values is all the more curious given their reliance—explicit disavowals notwithstanding—on precisely the modes of critical thought which derive from that same tradition. For even when denouncing 'enlightenment' beliefs as the source of all evil and oppression, these critics (Foucauidians and post-structuralists among them) still lay claim to the kind of demythologizing role which secular intellectuals have typically played over the past two centuries and more. (*Truth*, 300)

The question this observation poses for postmodern composition is whether it can with such confidence jettison the rhetorical concepts and tradition of the Enlightenment, whether even in rejecting these values it does not surreptitiously return to them. Before opting to take leave of modern commitments to rational discourse grounded in the argumentative validation of truth claims, we may therefore wish to recall the one thesis which Jurgen Habermas has suggested any form of redemptive critique must oppose, "the thesis that emancipation itself mystifies" (56).

Notes

1. Because of the impossibility of doing justice, in the space of a few pages, to the heterogeneity of poststructural thinking, it is important to point out that many significant strains of poststructuralism (i.e., variants of postcolonialist, neo-Marxist, or feminist theory) do not accept the radical semiotic self-enclosure promulgated in some forms of deconstructive literary analysis.

2. Of course, readers of *Reclaiming Pedagogy* are likely to find that few of its essays, and certainly not Knoper's, actually exemplify the model of rough-edged textuality which Knoper here advocates; these essays are, in fact, decidedly smooth and quite secure in their conclusions.

3. Here it is interesting to recall what James Berlin notes in *Rhetoric and Reality* regarding Warren Bower's 1938 analysis of the shift to reading in composition: Bower reported that "[m]ore and more emphasis has fallen on reading as a desirable end in itself, with an implied faith that if only a student will read enough good prose he will also be able to write it—the 'go thou and do likewise' theory of teaching" (71). The deconstructionist update of this credo—"go thou and do differently"—is (at least superficially) less constraining to students but may ultimately be no less frustrating or alienating.

Suggested Readings

Atkins, C. Douglas, and Michael L. Johnson, eds. *Reading Writing Differently: Deconstruction and the Teaching of Composition and Literature.* Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1985.
A widely cited collection of essays on its subject.

Crowley, Sharon. *A Teacher's Introduction to Deconstruction.* Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1989.
The most accessible introduction to Derrida and other deconstructionists.

Faigley, Lester. *Fragments of Rationality: Postmodernity and the Subject of Composition.* Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992.
An excellent discussion of the place of composition in the postmodern era.

Glossary

Basic Writing: A term used by Mina Shaughnessy to denote the writing of students whose proficiency is not adequate for their purposes, especially for matriculation in a college or university.

Deconstruction: Associated primarily with Jacques Derrida, deconstruction counters the Western "myth" of presence, that is, the prevailing belief that ultimate, determinate meanings can be grasped or, indeed, that there are final, determinate meanings and, hence, eternal truths. A key term in deconstruction is a neologism coined by Derrida: *différance,* based on the French *différer,* meaning both "to distinguish" or "to differ" and "to defer." Since we can distinguish anything—objects, concepts—only on the basis of how they differ from the other, the illusion of presence is only the play of differences, which produces that which we perceive and know.

Faculty Psychology: A school of psychology founded by Christian von Wolff (1679–1754) that viewed the mind as a collection or aggregate of faculties or "compartments." For example, George Campbell based his philosophy of rhetoric largely on the belief that the mind consists of four faculties: understanding, imagination, passion, and will.

Freewriting: A method of overcoming writer's block by simply putting words on paper and following wherever they lead.

Generative Grammar: Associated with the linguist Noam Chomsky, generative grammar is fundamentally an attempt to build a competence model, i.e., a "program" that would allow a computer (such as Hal in *2001: A Space Odyssey*) to generate language undifferentiatable from that generated by a human being. (See "sentence combining.")

Heuristics: A method of invention consisting of a series of probes or questions with two purposes: to help writers recall information that they already possess and to open aspects of the topic that can be investigated (for instance, through library research). As opposed to algorithms, heuristics are not rule-governed. The most widely known heuristic is the journalist's questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why?

Invention: Any system or procedure that writers use in order to discover or develop ideas. In classical rhetoric, invention was tripartite: *ethos* (questions concerning the character of the speaker), *logos* (questions concerning the subject of the discourse), and *pathos* (questions concerning the audience). (See "freewriting," "heuristics," and "Pentad.")

Method: If the mind is an aggregate of faculties, and if it works by association of ideas, then "rhetorical invention" is simply a matter of *methodically* appealing to the faculties in the appropriate manner—to the understanding through reason, to the imagination through beauty, to passion through sublimity, and to the will through vehemence.

Pentad: Kenneth Burke's *dramatistic* heuristic, consisting of five questions, concerning Act (What was done?), Agent (Who performed the Act?), Scene (Where and when did the Act take place?), Agency (What means were used or necessary for the Act?), and Purpose (Why was the act performed?).

Phenomenology: Edmund Husserl was the founder of this school of philosophy, which holds that conclusions must be based on evidence that is intuitable—that is, whatever counts as evidence must, within context, be experienceable. Phenomenology is important for rhetoric because its epistemology counters the tacit claim that only conclusions derived from "science" are valid.

Postmodernism names a complex of responses to the perceived sterility and oppression of modern Western culture. Associating these maladies with late capitalism's extension of control from the sphere of economic production to the more inclusive realm of the entire cultural and symbolic order, postmodernism calls into question enlightenment values such as rationality, truth, and progress, arguing that these merely serve to secure the monolithic structure of modern capitalist society by concealing or excluding any forces that might challenge its cultural dominance. To counter this hegemony, postmodernism draws upon the poststructuralist understanding of representations or signifiers as embedded within a matrix of differential relationships to other signifiers (rather than as standing in a correlative relationship to actual objects or to metaphysical essences) in order to open up a space for particularity and difference within and against the abstraction and uniformity of modernism. Thus the postmodern attitude tends to value heterogeneity over purity, diversity over unity, the local over the universal, and popular culture over elite culture or high art. But postmodernism is not simply a contrapositive form of modernism. Implicit to the postmodern attack on modernity is a paradoxical and problematic attachment to modernist tenets such as egalitarianism and democracy, and a chief dilemma for postmodern thought is how to justify these ethical commitments without invoking those transcendent or foundational values which postmodernity most scorns.

Poststructuralism arose in the 1970s as a challenge to the structuralist criticism of the 1950s and 1960s that had attempted to interpret literary texts and cultural behavior by appealing to underlying structures of signification—codes, conventions, or grammars that were claimed to govern and determine the meaning of texts or cultural practices. While acknowledging and indeed quite radically extending structuralism's interest in semiotic relationships, poststructuralism nonetheless rejects the key structuralist project of identifying systems or foundations "beneath" the surface of language that might be used to provide a supposedly objective account of literary or cultural artifacts. By contrast, poststructuralism maintains that both literature and culture are subsumed within a generalized textuality that permits no recourse to codes or grammars that might fix meaning or halt the ongoing and largely uncontrollable interplay of signs; the world itself is a text and there is no getting outside language to a privileged critical perspective that is free from the shifting and contradictory qualities inherent to all sign systems. In any of its various manifestations— deconstruction, new historicism, neo-pragmatism—poststructuralist thought constitutes a powerful critique of many of the traditional interests of humanistic studies: the meaning of texts, the nature of reality, the validity of knowledge, and the status of the human subject.

Rhetoric: The epigraphs to the introduction of this book illustrate the range of meanings for this term: "the art of finding the available means of persuasion in regard to any subject whatever" (Aristotle); "the study of misunderstanding and its remedies" (I. A. Richards); persuasion through *identification* "by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea" (Kenneth Burke). In popular usage, of course, "rhetoric" means insubstantial and deceptive use of language.

Rhetorical Invention: See "invention."

Sentence Combining: This instructional technique and technology in composition developed from the theories of transformational generative grammar. For example, generative grammarians posited that the sentence *The boy hitting the girl with a hockey stick seems like a normal teenager* is in its "deep structure" actually two sentences: (1) *The boy seems like a normal teenager* and (2) *[The boy was] hitting the girl with a hockey stick.* Thus, theorists such as John Mellon and Frank O'Hare developed materials that would help students acquire the ability to combine sentences and thus develop mature prose.

Tagmemics: A system of linguistic analysis associated with Kenneth Pike. In composition, tagmemics is identified with *Rhetoric: Discovery and Change,* by Richard E. Young, Alton L. Becker, and Kenneth E. Pike. The most notable feature of this book is its use of tagmemic theory to develop a heuristic for writers. The underlying premises of the heuristic are these: (1) To understand anything, you must know (a) how it differs from everything else in its class (*contrast*), (b) how much it can change and still be itself (*variation*), and (c) its place as a member of its class (*distribution*). (2) You can view anything as (d) a discrete entity (*particle*), (e) a process (*wave*), or (f) a system (*field*).

Voice: In composition, this term refers to the personae a writer assumes. The New Romantics value a "true" inner voice, the real voice of the writer, as opposed to the stuffy voice of the novice academic or clever voice of the cynical student. Though the Romantics claim they are able to recognize this "true" voice when they encounter it in writing, they do not explain how they do this or how others might develop the sensitivity to detect the "true" as opposed to the false and assumed.

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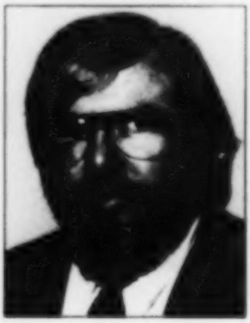
W. Ross Winterowd founded and for a number of years directed the graduate program in rhetoric, linguistics, and literature at the University of Southern California.



Jack Blum is a composition instructor who has taught at community colleges as well as private universities. Co-author of *A Basic Guide to the Whole Writing Process,* a developmental writing textbook published by Houghton-Mifflin, he is currently completing a dissertation on Kenneth Burke and Jurgen Habermas at the University of Southern California, where he serves as an assistant director of the Freshman Writing Program.

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In *A Teacher's Introduction to Composition in the Rhetorical Tradition*, W. Ross Winterowd and Jack Blum trace the evolution of the growing and ever-changing field of composition/rhetoric through numerous schools of thought, including Platonism, Aristoteleanism, New Criticism, and the modern poststructuralism. They do so with keen analytical insight and a thorough knowledge of composition studies and the history of rhetoric, providing an authoritative examination of methods, influences, and possibilities in the field of composition/rhetoric. *A Teacher's Introduction to Composition in the Rhetorical Tradition* is, in the words of the authors, a "text that furthers identification" in this complex, engaging field.

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